



Festival for friends

I thought I saw a pudgy cat. During the Farmington Founders Festival, cute little pets like this cat, firmly admired by its master, will be entered into the Festival Pet Show at 3 p.m. on Friday, July 30, in the Farmington Plaza Shopping Center, Grand River, west of Orchard Lake.

Senior housing gets boost as Hills zeroes in on zoning

By STEVE BARNARD
Farmington editor

The Farmington Hills City Council has voted to establish a study group to recommend an ordinance for zoning of senior citizen housing.

The vote came at last week's council session after the city legislators heard the pros and cons of rezoning a ten-acre parcel behind the Nardin Park Methodist Church for use as senior citizen housing. At present, the land is zoned for single family housing. The Nardines Village Inc. is requesting the land be rezoned to multiple dwelling to senior citizen housing. The rezoning would allow the construction of a building at the site on the southwest corner of Eleven Mile and Middle Belt.

Young for consideration of special zoning for senior citizen housing were Mayor Keith Deacon, councilmembers Jan Dulan, Fred Lichtman, Earl Oppenheimer, Robert McConnell and Joanne Smith.

In opposition was Councilmember Joan Dudley.

AS NOW WRITTEN the city ordinance

allows senior citizen housing to be built under the multiple dwelling designation. A designation for senior citizen housing is nonexistent.

"My feeling is that we should evolve a special purpose zoning district for senior citizen housing," said Lichtman. "But until we get that we have no legal basis to rezone the land behind Nardin Park Methodist for multiple dwellings," he continued.

While voting to establish consideration of a special zoning classification, the council tabled the Nardines' request until an ordinance is established. The Nardines' proposal created opposition from surrounding homeowner groups which feared rezoning would establish a precedent of special zoning and at the same time decrease homeowner property values.

Ms. Dudley rejected the special zoning request, saying it could cause more trouble for the city by being deemed discriminatory. She described establishing a special zoning designation as a "cop-out."

"I don't think that special zoning should be considered as a solution. It is one that may not work," she warned.

She cited a similar special zoning case in another state which was ruled as discriminatory because the zoning was designed for a special group.

BUT THE SIX other councilmembers shared Lichtman's sentiments, saying there was a need for a special zoning designation.

"There certainly is a need for senior citizen housing in Farmington Hills. The problem is that everybody is for it, but everybody says they don't want it in their neighborhood," said Oppenheimer.

It is imperative to have the special designation, said Oppenheimer, before Farmington Hills becomes a "city without a heart" and without a soul. Oppenheimer rejected the argument that building senior citizen housing in a residential area would devalue the property, citing examples of the neighborhoods around Detroit Baptist Manor and the Manor West.

That is a completely invalid argument

After Baptist Manor and Manor West were built, there wasn't any evidence of devaluation of property," he said.

McConnell defended the council's action in tabling the Nardines' rezoning request until special zoning was established, saying approval of this spot zoning could be detrimental to the community at large.

There is no guarantee that this land would be used for senior citizen housing in the future," said McConnell. "We do need a zoning change, but we should look beyond the present zoning," he said.

As a warning, McConnell noted that a proposed senior citizen housing project in Walled Lake suggested by the Nardines had fallen through because of financial difficulties. Mrs. Smith also supported the special designation but added that senior citizen housing should be looked upon as an asset in residential areas. "I don't think of a better use for church land than senior citizen housing," she said. "I don't understand how residents object to senior citizen housing rather than a shopping center across the street."

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Blue ribbon force studies enrollment

By RON GARBINSKI

The Farmington School District has been faced with declining enrollments for years, but it never has attacked the problem on a district-wide basis.

To combat this situation, the board of education decided Tuesday night to implement a recommendation by Superintendent Lewis Schulman that would create a "Blue Ribbon Task Force" to probe the district's possible long range responses.

The committee will consider the feasibility of closing schools, changing building plans, utilizing surplus space and changing programs and organizations within the district.

The aim of this committee is to provide the community with as much advance notice as possible on how the district plans to deal with declining enrollments, Schulman explains.

"The district is never looked at the problem from a district-wide standpoint. It's always been from the elementary or secondary level. We must look at the whole picture and make decisions for the entire district at one time."

It's not fair to give the community short notice that a school will close or their boundaries will change. Our idea here is to give the community plenty of notice of what is coming down from the administration offices," Schulman continues.

THE TASK FORCE will consist of ten members and be chaired by Stanley Hecker, a renowned consultant from Michigan State University.

Professor Hecker has worked with several other state school districts and is a member of the Michigan State Board of Education Committee on declining enrollment.

Joining Hecker on the committee will be: Walter Jablonksi, principal at Forest Elementary School; Robert Brown, principal at Lower Junior High; Jerry Potter, assistant principal at Farmington Senior High; John Tisham, an Farmington Education Association representative; and an unnamed representative from the district's non-instructional bargaining unit.

Five community members also have been selected for the task force. They include Richard Wallace, Lyla Young, John Washburn, Leon Egan and Mary LaLara.

Five community members also have been selected for the task force. They include Richard Wallace, Lyla Young, John Washburn, Leon Egan and Mary LaLara.

Dr. Hecker left three years ago to make sure time to make some clear cut decisions on declining enrollments and what our response should be," he continues. "Anything beyond three years would be crystal balling it. We picked three years because by then we will experience a sizable drop in enrollment at the senior high level. We should then be able to respond to the problem at all grade levels."

SCHULMAN WANTS to avoid his administrators coming to the board later in the year requesting that a school be closed or boundaries changed.

To prevent this, the task force will organize an early August with a budget of \$5,000. It will meet for four months, examining all demographic data available to the district and its staff.

Schulman predicts that the committee's final recommendations will be submitted to the board by its first meeting in December.

"Hopefully, the superintendent adds this will enable the board to review the task force's recommendations and come to a timely decision. What the district does to (Continued on page 61)



Bill Gucciardo, a Farmington School District driver education instructor, recently voiced concern over problems facing teachers in the summer program at Farmington and Harrison High Schools which, someday, he claims, may prove disastrous for the district. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

Driving teacher warns of unsafe conditions

By RON GARBINSKI

If things don't change in the Farmington School District's driver education program, it may turn into another East Junior High School incident.

At least that's the word from Bill Gucciardo, a driver's ed instructor at Farmington High School.

Earlier this year, a 13-year-old East student was electrocuted while operating an ungrounded machine in a shop class under conditions that were termed unsafe by the State Department of Labor.

Gucciardo has been with the program for 15 years and claims this may be his last if the problems aren't solved.

"We have the potential for another East Junior High here," Gucciardo says. "There are bad brakes on the instructor's side of the car, there aren't any passenger side rear-view mirrors, and these new cars just don't have any power. And when you are out on the road with one of them, almost anything can happen."

At one time the district's program was good, but now it's not as good as most of the instructors would like to see," he adds. "For Gucciardo and several other instructors, the program has the potential to be an efficient and better one if the district just would take care of the 'little things'."

The irritated instructor says "One problem we've been trying to improve is the ridiculous markings on Farmington High's parking lot that we use as a driving course."

AT THE FARMINGTON High lot, there is a maze of yellow and white lines that often confuse the young drivers more than help, he says.

"The students are supposed to follow the lines and many times I yell at them because they don't. But I really can't do that

because what lines out there are they supposed to follow. All I can ask is where are the lines that the district said they would take care of for us," Gucciardo continues.

The program has the potential, but the district keeps saying it's short on money. We went to our teachers' association representative and said we wanted to live given areas against the district, but since there is only three weeks of the program left, we decided to stick it out," he adds.

And in the end, the district is going to find it will have to pay more in insurance if anything happens than it will save by not improving what needs to be improved.

While Gucciardo lashed out against the school district's policy, he went on to explain his view of young drivers participating in the program.

"He maintains that the summer program only produces drivers and he emphasizes to parents that they should watch their children like hawks, driving with them for several weeks until they feel their children are ready for the road."

But there's a problem. A lot of times parents just don't care," he says. And that's too bad because if I have the figures right, one out of four teenage drivers is involved in a serious accident, possibly because someone just didn't have the time to help them become better drivers."

COMMENTING ON THE local program, the driving instructor says a lot of the students treat the cars on the range like toys.

"Many times they don't care themselves and just want to play games out on the parking lot driving courses."

Many want to learn and take it seriously, but a few don't," he adds. And that really irritates me. Sometimes it takes me several hours to wind down and relax after I get home from driver education classes."

Recently, one of the driver education cars was driving through town when it was hit in the rear because it just didn't have the power to move, Gucciardo claims.

We had no power to make the left hand turn. It was just like we were putting around slowly. We had ample time to make the turn, but the car just wouldn't move. That's one of the problems we instructors face. And there's more."

In the legs of this program along with the other instructors, we see what is happening and it's bad because we can't get the students to follow instruction or directions. They think it's a game not all of the students do, but a lot feel that way," says the frustrated teacher.

Gucciardo teaches math at Farmington High School and works with new drivers during the summer to stay involved with students and continue teaching.



Strike up the band and come march along with the thousands who will be participating in the Farmington Founders Festival for the next week. The parade will be on Saturday, July 31, at 10 p.m.

Festival frolic is launched

By STEVE BARNARD
Farmington editor

See full calendar in Monday's paper

"Pride in our past—faith in our future." That's the spirit greeting this year's return to the annual Farmington Founders Day Festival which begins this weekend. Thousands of residents from around the metropolitan Detroit area will flock to the Farmington-Farmington Hills area to enjoy the festivities which run from July 24-31.

Kicking off the events this weekend will be a giant fireworks display, a tennis tournament, a community "Sunday-in-the-park" picnic, a chicken barbecue, bicycle celebration and an old-fashioned sing-along.

The tennis tournament begins on Saturday and is conducted at all three of the area high schools, Farmington, North Farmington and Harrison. Those not registered are welcome to watch the tennis happen in action. The tournament will continue on Sunday.

Folk can drop by on Sunday, noon, at the Masonic Temple, Grand River and Farmington Road, and enjoy a chicken barbecue with their neighbors. Meals will be served until 6 p.m.

THE TEMPLE also will be hosting a pop

py supper on Wednesday, from 5-7 p.m., a sing-along on Thursday, from 5-7 p.m., and a deluxe Swiss steak dinner on Friday, during the same hours.

The Temple will round out its meal with a pancake breakfast on Sunday, Aug. 1, from 9-11 a.m. until 1 p.m.

A spectacular fireworks display will be on Sunday, at 9:30 p.m. at the rear of Our Lady of Servant Church, Power and Shawnee. Metropolitan National Bank of Farmington is presenting the fireworks program. In the event of rain, the display will be on Saturday, July 31.

Games will include legal seating at 1 p.m. Age categories are 64 year olds, 61-11 year olds and 12 and over. The entire legal must be swallowed.

At 2:30 p.m., a pony tail contest will be conducted. It is open to all persons 11 years and younger. The prize will be for the longest pony tail.

The jump rope relay will get under way at 3:45 p.m. Father-daughter, mother-daughter events will highlight the three-legged race at 2 p.m. A shoe-scrabble will be at 3:30 p.m.

At 4 p.m., a peacock race will be followed by the sack race for moms, dads and teenagers. Winding up the family team effort will be the 4:30 p.m. family piggy back relay with teams composed of mother, father and a child. The wheelbarrow race will be at 5 p.m.

The old-fashioned sing-along will be at the P.F.U. United Methodist Church from 7:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m.

Throughout the Farmington Festival's week-long celebration, a wide range of family oriented events will be available throughout the community. Carnival, helicopter rides, the Jaycees Annual Rodeo, the parade, display booths and food specialties are among the many possibilities for family fun.



Farmington Founders Festival Days will be a reflection of our past as children and adults join to celebrate. The parade always is a big attraction.

inside

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