

# Senior housing question mixed from ballot

By LYNN ORR

It looks like the nearly three-year battle over a proposed senior citizen housing project in Farmington Hills won't be decided at the polls.

After months of hedging, City Clerk Floyd Cairns announced last week that he would not place two questions aimed at stopping the development on the November ballot. Sufficient petition signatures demanding the ballot

proposals were collected by the Council of Homeowners, a coalition of subdivision boards.

Cairns said that he concurred with an earlier opinion by City Atty. Paul Bibeau that one of the questions, a charter amendment, would be illegal.

Sources close to the homeowners said that efforts were continuing this week to persuade the city council to put the fate of the housing project before the voters in November on its

own initiative. The homeowners have threatened in the past to file suit if the matter is not settled by popular vote.

Housing fees say they don't oppose housing for the elderly, just mid-rise construction—the type of structures proposed by Multi-Rise Associates for their privately financed complex on Orchard Lake Road south of Fourteen Mile.

Last winter, the homeowners lost a major battle in their efforts to block

construction of the complex when the city council approved zoning ordinances which allow senior citizen housing to be built up to 60 feet in height. Two housing fees were elected to the council a month before but were not eligible to vote on the new zoning.

"I can't see how I can put something on the ballot our attorney says is illegal," Cairns said, in explaining his decision.

The proposed charter amendment, if

approved by voters, would require voter approval of any zoning changes not outlined in the city's master plan. The amendment would be retroactive to Jan. 1, 1977, thus nullifying the city council's approval of the special senior citizen zoning.

The second petition drive presented Cairns with certified signatures asking for a referendum on the proposed elderly complex itself. The outcome would be binding on the city council.

According to the city charter, an initiatory referendum must be either rejected or placed on the ballot within 30 days of the clerk's certification of signatures.

The council failed to meet the 30-day deadline Monday, giving rise to speculation that council members may consider a settlement with housing fees to avoid a court battle.

Cairns expects the matter to end up in court, however.

# Farmington Observer

Volume 89 Number 69 Thursday, June 15, 1978 Farmington, Michigan 92 Pages Twenty-Five Cents

## Inch, Rolnick victors in school trustee bids

By LYNN ORR

Jack Inch and Janice Rolnick overcame conflict of interest charges Monday as barely two per cent of school district voters elected the two teachers to four-year terms on the Farmington School Board.

Rain, a lack of issues, and the absence of a millage question were blamed for the district's poorest voter turnout in more than seven years. Only 1,103 votes were cast in the district's four precincts.

Of about 49,000 registered voters in the district, 29,000 are considered active voters.

Both Inch, 48, and Rolnick, 36, who

teach at Oakland Community College, were pleased with their victories but expressed displeasure with the lack of interest in the election. William Prisk, assistant superintendent of finance, speculated that the poor showing was the smallest voter turnout he could recall.

"We checked back to 1971, and in 17 elections, this one produced the lowest number of votes," he said.

In 1965, an election for trustees without a millage question attracted 1,640 votes.

Ms. Rolnick believes a combination of events, including the absence of a millage question, was responsible for the poor turnout. She expressed dis-

pleasure with newspaper coverage in the Farmington Observer as well.

"I'M DELIGHTED, of course, to win and looking forward to serving on the board," she said, "but I think the spathy is disgusting. I was disappointed in the paper too. I think people should have had something in Monday reminding people to vote."

Inch, who topped the voting with 852 votes, was pleased with his campaign workers, he said.

"I'm very pleased with the people who worked for me," he commented. "I didn't expect as much cooperation or help as I received."

Ms. Rolnick pulled 632 votes, while candidates Howard Aldrich and Catherine Egypt received 247 and 209 votes, respectively. The candidates placed in the same ranking in three of the precincts, while Aldrich and Egypt reversed positions in Precinct No. 3 where 143 voters cast their ballots.

Both Inch and Rolnick rebuffed charges that they would be courting conflict of interest positions as board members during the campaign. Both denied that their occupations as community college instructors would conflict with board tenure.

The new trustees will be sworn into office July 10, when they will replace William Gravus, current board president, and Trustee Anne Struble.



**Cleaning up**  
The school doors are closing to students for summer vacation, but staying behind are those who must clean up and prepare for the influx of students for the next semester. (Staff photo)

## Ambitious plans kick off festival

The folks who founded Farmington never met Terry Sever. And Sever, who was just born too late, never got to know them, either.

But this doesn't seem to bother Sever, who has been spending much of his time organizing the city's annual celebration in honor of the five Quakers who trekked here 164 winters ago from Farmington, N.Y.

It's safe to assume that if they had never made it, something would be here anyway. But it probably wouldn't be called Farmington, and the mid-summer celebration wouldn't have a name as alliterative as Farmington Founders Festival.

But Terry Sever hasn't been worrying much about this sort of thing; he's been more concerned about getting donations, making schedules and seeing that everybody gets ready to have a good time for a few days at the end of next month.

Sever is this year's general chairman for the festival, scheduled for July 26-30. And he says things are going just fine.

"In the past we've been down to the wire, but this year the programming has been moved up six weeks," he says. "I really look good."

A FINAL SCHEDULE of events should be ready in about two weeks, both Farmington and Farmington Hills have proclaimed July 23-30 as Founders Festival Week. Gov. Millen says he'll be here, and Sever is all excited.

"More people in the community are gonna be involved, more things are gonna happen," he says.

The festival parade down Grand River, which drew 100,000 people last year, is scheduled for 10 a.m., Saturday, July 29, and the fireworks display will be that night.

Sunday in the Park, a family picnic in City Park with games and contests, will be Sunday, and the Farmington Community Band will give a concert in the park that night.

A bicycle parade, starting from each corner of the city, will start at 10 a.m. Sunday. Riders—who include whoever shows up—will converge at City Park. Sever says 300-500 riders are expected, and both children and adults are welcome.

"THINGS ARE MOVING real good but we can use a little more support. Anybody who intends to get involved should do it now," Sever says. "All in all, the involvement has been terrific."

While he says he doesn't tend to worry about problems, he admits to a lingering concern for more donations.

"We depend on area merchants to supply us with \$10, \$20 and \$30 donations. Donations have been coming in slow," he says. This year's festival has a \$12,000 budget, and is dependent on help from businesses and individuals to cover the costs of many events.

Anyone wishing to make a donation should contact the Farmington Cham-



**TERRY SEVER**  
ber of Commerce at 474-3440.

This year's festival will be expanded more than in the past into the Farmington Hills area, and Sever says more shopping centers want to be involved.

"We still have some programming to do," he adds.

"SOME PEOPLE think the festival is for the benefit of business in the downtown area and that's kind of narrow-minded. Wherever you have people you have business."

Sever, as the festival's general chairman, heads up a non-profit corporation organized to run the annual affair, now in its 14th year. The volunteer executive committee of 12 has been meeting since January—amid piles of ice and snow—to make plans for the festival.

This is the third year in the group for Sever. Two years ago, he was finance chairman.

"I thought I'd give it a shot. They said 'All you have to do is raise money,'" he says now. Last year he served as first vice-chairman and this year he heads the organization.

"I'm trying to eliminate each problem as it occurs. A lot of people have really made things a lot easier."

He hasn't lost much sleep over it, though.

"I do wake up in the middle of the night sometimes with an idea. Usually the best ideas come in the middle of the night."

Sever says he's more excited about this year's festival than he was the last time around.

"I have a better feel for what's happening and more people are coming to us with ideas. You gotta generate some enthusiasm and motivate people."

He was acting director of those services and staff director of the chapter's long-range planning committee. He has been with the Red Cross since 1967.

He received a BA from Asbury College in Kentucky and a masters of divinity from the Garrett Theological Seminary in Illinois.

**Precinct TALLIES are as follows:**

Precinct No. 1 (Farmington Training Center): Inch, 340; Rolnick, 204; Aldrich, 101; Egypt, 67. Total: 712.

Precinct No. 2 (Dunckel Junior High): Inch, 287; Rolnick, 238; Aldrich, 75; Egypt, 78. Total: 678.

Precinct No. 3 (Warner Junior High): Inch, 54; Rolnick, 48; Egypt, 23; Aldrich, 18. Total: 143.

Precinct No. 4 (East Junior High): Inch, 157; Rolnick, 132; Aldrich, 46; Egypt, 42. Total: 377.

Absentee votes: Inch, 14; Rolnick, 10; Aldrich, 7; Egypt, 7. Total: 19.

## The outer limit reached

# Hills taxes are raised to 9 mills

By STEVE BARNABY  
Farmington editor

Farmington Hills' city property tax rate will go up by 1.75 mills for the 1978-79 fiscal year.

That was the determination of the city council after weeks of debate. The final decision was made this week when, on a split vote, the council levied an additional mill for one year to pay for drain construction. Another 3/4 mill for general operation expenses also was voted, bringing that levy to eight mills.

The total city millage will be nine. Last year, the council levied 7 1/4 mills to pay the bills. No additional millage was levied for drain work for 1977-78.

For a person whose house is assessed at \$30,000 (one half the value) he will be paying an additional \$2.50 in city taxes. Each mill is worth \$1 for every \$1,000 of assessment.

The city administration's recommended budget was pared down by \$83,250 after the council ordered the general fund tax rate kept at eight mills. The revised budget will be \$3,809,450, down from \$10,963,655 which was recommended by the administration.

The council insisted on the reductions.

City Mgr. George Majors protested the reduced raises saying they would have a negative effect on non-union employees. He warned that some employees might look elsewhere for employment.

Majors was slated for a \$41,600 salary next year, but with the two per cent reduction he will get \$40,825. His current salary is \$38,880.

THE SECOND highest paid non-union employee will be Department of Public Services Director Ralph Magid, who will tally up \$33,400 next year. He

originally was slated to make \$34,030. Police Director John Nichols will be paid \$31,500, down from a proposed \$32,100. Fire Chief John Van De Voort will be paid \$27,825 as will Finance Director Girard Miller.

City Clerk Floyd Cairns will earn \$25,060 and Parks and Recreation Division Director Doug Gaynor will be paid \$24,150.

Four non-union employees will be receiving 10 per cent raises to bring their pay up to a more equitable level with their responsibilities, according to city officials. Among those is Mike Dorman, assistant to the city manager, who will go from \$16,300 to \$18,000.

## Red Cross picks Farmington man

A Farmington Hills man has been appointed director of the Office of Volunteers and Youth Services for the Southeastern Michigan Chapter of the American Red Cross.

James MacDonald is responsible for the overall programming and direction of volunteer and youth services in Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties.

He was acting director of those services and staff director of the chapter's long-range planning committee. He has been with the Red Cross since 1967.

He received a BA from Asbury College in Kentucky and a masters of divinity from the Garrett Theological Seminary in Illinois.

THE LARGEST CUTS came in the police and fire departments. Originally the police budget was set at \$2,651,235, but was reduced to \$2,615,445, a \$35,790 cut. The fire department budget was set at \$786,340 but was reduced by \$3,125 to \$783,215.

Among the items cut in the police budget were matching funds for crime prevention, \$7,000; conferences and workshops, \$1,200; education and training, \$1,000; radios, \$24,000, and firing range improvements, \$500.

The fire department lost two proposed full-time firefighters for a total savings of \$30,400. Other cuts were for fire hose and tools, \$4,800, and typewriters, \$1,200.

The most controversial reduction was in non-union salary increases. Seven per cent had been proposed, but the raises were cut to five per cent. Although the lower raises would

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