

Farmington Observer

Volume 89 Number 85

Thursday, August 10, 1978

Farmington, Michigan

68 Pages

Twenty Five Cents

©1978 Suburban Communication Corporation. All Rights Reserved.



An overflow crowd at Farmington City Hall forced a move to the Farmington High auditorium for a public hearing on the site plan of proposed senior citizen housing. (Staff photos by Harry Mauthe)

City approves senior citizen housing project

By LYNN ORR

Farmington City Council unanimously gave a green light Monday night to begin the construction of a senior citizen housing project in downtown Farmington.

The vote came after more than three hours of discussion with more than 300 Farmington residents who turned out for the public hearing on the site plan of the 153-unit project as presented by Forest City Dillon, Inc., a private development firm. The overflow crowd at City Hall forced the council to move to the Farmington High School auditorium, where about 35 persons in the crowd voiced objections and support for the project.

The nays were prominent, as residents cited opposition to minority occupancy, mid-rise height and architectural design of the building, rent subsidy by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), income limitations for residents, possible impact on neighboring property values, and lack of preference for Farmington residents.

About 10 of the 35 spoke in favor of the project, including a representative of the Farmington-West Bloomfield Area League of Women Voters, and several residents.

THE COUNCIL overturned objections to OK the final phase of the project, which began just over a year ago. Earlier this year, the council approved variances for parking and other considerations for the project in the Central Business District (CBD). With the council's approval in hand, Forest City is (CBD). In the spring, the Farmington school board agreed to option a three-acre site to Forest City for a purchase price of \$25,000.

With final approval of the site plan as recommended by the city's planning commission, Forest City is expected to begin demolition of the old Farmington High School on Thomas to pave way for the six-story, brick and concrete housing complex on the site just north of Grand River.

Although several residents asked the council to put the housing question on the ballot, the councilmen opposed such a move. "We have provided a forum for people to obtain more information and

get an understanding of what this project is about," said Councilman Bill Hartsock. "This is a government of representation. It would be impossible to run a government by town meeting."

"You have entrusted us to make a decision tonight."

"What kind of question would we put on the ballot?" asked Councilman Alton Bennett. The options, such as a referendum on senior citizen housing itself, income limitation, and mid-rise height, would make any ballot question impossible, he said.

Mayor Richard Tupper, and Councilmen Ralph Yoder and Warren Buckler, all voiced support of the project before the final vote.

THE PROJECT will include 153 units, including 148 one-bedroom apartments and five two-bedroom apartments. Commons area, library, meeting rooms, and outside commons area, 75 parking bays, round out the complex. Each unit will be equipped with a doorwall to an outside balcony, range, refrigerator, sink and garbage disposal in the kitchen, bathroom facilities, smoke detector, and emergency pullcord.

The housing complex will be open to all senior citizens 62 years of age and older who are capable of independent living and meet income criteria as established by HUD. Income limits are \$10,200 for single persons and \$11,700 for married couples. The HUD rent subsidy granted to Forest City Dillon provides that no person living in the complex shall pay more than 25 percent of his or her annual income in rent.

Rents of about \$350, the expected fair market value rental, will be subsidized under the HUD grant, according to Frank Darcy who presented the project at Monday night's meeting. Darcy expects to finance the \$4 million project by conventional means and projects between a three and six percent profit on the investment.

There are already about 200 persons on a waiting list for the complex, he added. All those that sign up for the waiting list will be mailed an application at the same time at a future date. Forest City personnel will aid applicants in preparing the forms, and Darcy will accept tenants based on (Continued on page 2A)

Senior project stirs controversy

Overflow crowd jams meeting

By LYNN ORR

Racism reared its head in public in Farmington Monday night. Many in a crowd of more than 300 Farmington residents applauded when one resident verbally opposed minority occupancy of the proposed senior citizen complex.

"This is open housing," declared Lake Wolfe of Schulte Street. "What's that going to bring into town? When we open this to open housing, I'm terribly afraid of what that's going to bring to town. There are a lot of people in the inner city that want to get out here."

Though many in the audience cheered his speech, the audience demurred when Wolfe later spoke out in response to a statement made by David Singer of Hillcrest.

"I fail to understand why people of Farmington would have anything to fear from someone who is 62 years old and may be of a minority race," Singer said.

Wolfe replied that if any such person bothered him, he'd "blow them away," which drew a hushed response from the audience.

Others in the crowd asked questions about minority quotas of the proposed 153-unit elderly housing complex in

downtown Farmington. GERALD HARRINGTON of Warner asked what kind of minority quotas would be required for the housing complex under the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant.

Frank Darcy, area manager for Forest City Dillon, Inc. which will build the \$4 million housing complex in downtown Farmington, replied that HUD set minority goals, not quotas.

"Open housing is the law of the land," Darcy explained, adding that with or without a HUD rent subsidy grant, he would be required to open the housing to all persons.

"I don't think, however, that you have a very large minority in Farmington, so I would think my goal would be minimal," he said.

Audience reaction to the questions and statements by about 35 persons in the audience was mixed. While objections to the housing complex drew applause, a statement by the Farmington-West Bloomfield Area League of Women Voters in support of the project also drew applause.

Several residents cited the results of personal surveys conducted door-to-door about the proposed project.

A survey conducted by the newly-

formed Farmington Old Village Association indicated that most of the 60 persons surveyed were in favor of senior citizen housing but opposed to this type of project.

RICK DUNLOP of Warner conducted a poll of about 240 persons and summarized questions of those surveyed. Concerns of the residents were: many Farmington residents might not be eligible for the project given income limitations; height and architectural opposition; influence of the project on property values in the neighboring area; potential liabilities for taxpayers; HUD subsidy and possible neglect of the building; and whether senior citizens could safely escape from the building in an emergency.

Because Farmington has the second highest proportion of senior citizens of any city in Oakland County, Deadman believes many residents will qualify for the project. He added that the city residents will qualify for the housing complex. Multiple units such as the complex require fewer city services than residential homes, Deadman added, and said he did not foresee a need for additional services. Safety standards exceed those of nursing

homes built in Oakland County, he added.

Based on the reports by other communities with similar projects, property values should not decline, he said. Audience member John Campbell cited the Chatham Hills subdivision and apartments as one case of neighboring multiple units failing to downgrade property values.

"It's very difficult to build an old building," said Mayor Richard Tupper in response to several objections about the architectural design of the building, which is planned as an earth-toned facade.

The City of Farmington could not build a similar project on its own, he added, which is one reason the council supported the private development project.

In response to queries about the HUD rent subsidy, Darcy explained that should Forest City Dillon pull out of the project at some time in the future, the company would never be allowed to build again under a federal or state grant.

He urged the audience to rely on the company's extensive and successful track record in building similar complexes across the country—including one in neighboring Livonia.

Area voters OK bond sale, Ross, Fitzgerald

By LYNN ORR

City of Farmington voters by a more than 2-1 margin approved the sale of \$1 million in general obligation bonds for the financing of improvements to the city's water system.

The bond question received 1,108 yes votes, while 532 voted no, as 27 percent of the city's 7,488 registered voters turned out Tuesday. Total votes cast were 2,092, a slight edge over the August 1976 primary, when 26 percent of the city's registered voters cast their ballots.

Voter turnout in Farmington Hills improved by three per cent over the '76 primary, as 7,129 voters, 22 per cent, showed up at the polls.

Both cities' voters agreed with their neighbors, supporting political newcomer Doug Ross in his successful attempt to unseat incumbent state Sen. Daniel Cooper (D-15th District) to gain a slot on the November ballot. Ross led Cooper in both cities, with

55 per cent of the Hills votes and 60 per cent of the Farmington votes. Ross won the Democratic primary by a comfortable 55 per cent margin in the district. He will face Republican hopeful Markus Simon, who was unopposed in the primary.

VOTERS followed state and county-wide trends in the gubernatorial and senate races. Democratic challenger William Fitzgerald captured 31 per cent of the votes in Farmington Hills and 33 per cent in Farmington to lead the Democratic candidates.

William Ralls had a slight edge over Zolton Ferency in both cities for the runner-up slot, although Ferency came in a distant second in statewide balloting. Fitzgerald received 257 votes in Farmington and 1,044 votes in Farmington Hills.

Gov. William Milliken received 2,927 votes in the Hills and 903 votes in the city as an unopposed candidate. Carl Levin, who outpolled the throng

of Democratic candidates in the bid to unseat U.S. Sen. Robert Griffin, also won the support of Farmington area voters. Levin garnered 45 per cent of the Hills votes and 33 per cent of the city's votes to outpace Phil Power, who ran second in both cities. Levin received 1,541 votes in the Hills and 249 votes in the city. Power outpolled the four remaining candidates with 848 or 25 per cent of the Farmington votes.

OAKLAND County Prosecutor L. Brooks Patterson was swamped by

incumbent Griffin in the Farmington area. Griffin won 70 per cent of the GOP votes in the Hills and 71 per cent in the city.

Slate Rep. Wilbur Brotherton (R-Farmington) will meet Democratic challenger Robert Green in November. Both men ran unopposed in the local races.

In the county commissioner races, GOP challenger Martha Hoyer failed to topple incumbent Dennis Murphy in the 24th District race. Murphy will face Lou Coy in November. Lillian Moffitt (R-15th District), who ran

unopposed in the primary, will face Anthony Tedesco of Farmington Hills, who won a close race in the Democratic primary with Albert Keenan.

Tedesco received 281 votes in the Farmington Hills portion of the district, while Keenan was tapped by 213 voters. Tedesco outpolled Keenan in the district with 1,013 votes to Keenan's 994 at the last count yesterday.

Democratic challenger John Campbell will attempt to unseat incumbent John McDonald (R-27th District) in the county commissioner race in

November. Both men ran unopposed.

In the 25th District in northern Farmington Hills, Republican Robert McConnell will face George Montgomery in November. Both men also ran unopposed.

U.S. Rep. William Brodhead (D-17th District) was unopposed in the primary and will be unopposed in the November election.

In the Oakland County circuit court race, Judith Denney Parson outpolled the other candidates in the Farmington area, although she ran fourth in countywide balloting.



Waiting for Farmington voters to cast their ballots in city hall are three lonely poll workers, Margaret Yagerleiner, (left), Dorothy

Moore and Dorothy Keating sat and waited while many voters played hooky from the primary election. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

inside

SUMMER CLEARANCE

A garage sale advertised in our classified section will do the trick, just as it did for Mary Ellen Packers. "So many people came," she told us, "it was a complete success." Now's the time for you to clean up and earn extra money for last minute summer fun. Call us today.

NEWS LINE.....352-5400
CLASSIFIED LINE.....591-4900

DIAL DIRECT
644-1070

Suburban Life.....Section B
Sports.....Section C
Classified.....Section D
Business.....Section E
Election Results.....A-3
Editorial Page.....A-10
New Gallery Opens.....B-1
Community Calendar.....B-2
Room for Design.....B-5