

Consolidation Foes Don't Have The Answers; We Urge City 'Yes' Vote To Find Solutions

City of Farmington residents should vote "yes" Nov. 4 because it may well be their last opportunity to consider consolidation.

If city residents vote "no" Nov. 4, the township will certainly incorporate, leaving the present city landlocked and limited to an area of 2.6 square miles.

THE SMALL city will not be able to expand its area by annexation because it will be entirely surrounded by incorporated municipalities. The only tax base the city will have will be the one it now has.

Because there are no large, vacant tracts of land in the city, development will be limited to renewal of existing facilities. Because renewal costs money, the city will have to invest money to keep its tax base at the same level or to improve it slightly.

The future of the city without consolidation, is best described by City Manager John Dinan in a report he made for the city council:

"It should be noted after 1978 we believe that the city will near its saturation, and we will receive very little new growth, and we will probably start to depend on higher local taxes to cover the increased cost of operating the city. The immediate problem of operating the city does not look too difficult during the next eight years, but beyond that we cannot see a very bright future with the present boundaries of the city."

The Michigan State University report says if consolidation fails, the present "wearing out" trend in the city will accelerate. "It

is in the mutual interest of both city and township to apply the total resources of the area to curb the wearing out process now evident in small parts of the area."

That same report answers those opponents who urge a "no" vote now but admit consolidation may be needed in the future:

"There are a number of conditions now present which permit consolidation as a viable alternative in the Farmington Area. These conditions will most likely have changed after an extended period of time -- so to now consider consolidation as something to be 'done later' is quite unrealistic.

"It appears that governmental services and financial patterns are now amenable to a merger of the several governmental units."

SOME CITY RESIDENTS argue the city should struggle along alone, and then when it is too weak to continue -- ask the township residents to adopt their weaker sister. Such an adoption is not likely in 1980.

Experts recognize the plight of the city. Why wait 10 years and attempt the solution when it will be harder to achieve? The solution is available today!

Recognition of a problem places upon the individual the responsibility to search for a solution. Opponents of consolidation do not have a solution to the city's future problems. It would be irresponsible not to seek a solution.

Those opponents -- who don't have answers -- have confused the issue with claims of higher taxes and dilution of services. At this point, it does not appear that either will

be the case.

Dinan's study estimated the tax rate the first year for the new city's operational expense will be 8.6 mills. This is lower than the nine mills city residents paid in 1968-69. Without consolidation, Dinan estimates the 1978 city tax rate will be 11.2 mills.

Indeed, it appears the opposite is true -- if consolidation fails, the city's tax rate will go up.

The argument consolidation will result in dilution of city services also does not appear valid. Dinan's financial study which estimated a tax levy of 8.6 mills for the consolidated city points this out.

Editorial

Dinan estimated what it would cost the new city to provide the same level of services now enjoyed by the present city. Dinan found it possible to maintain present services for the city and raise services for township residents to that level, with revenues derived from a millage levy equal to the city's current rate. This prevents dilution of services.

Indeed, failure to consolidate could result in dilution of services for the city as the tax base deteriorates. The only way not to dilute services, if consolidation fails, would be to raise the tax rate.

LOGIC AND REASON do not support the cries of the consolidation opponents who evoke emotion to support a premise. But emotion will not save Farmington.

Farmington will grow with the logic and reason behind the decisions made by informed residents who prefer to look toward tomorrow instead of basking in yesterday's memories.

What can consolidation do for the City of Farmington?

Consolidation can prevent the city from watching its tax base crumble with the acceleration of the present "wearing out" trend.

Consolidation can prevent the city from being landlocked without a voice in deciding what will be developed around its borders.

Consolidation can result in area resources being used to facilitate downtown redevelopment, a necessary project that will benefit the entire area.

Consolidation would give the city a voice in the future of the 36-square mile area instead of a voice for only a 2.6 square mile area.

By eliminating needless competition, consolidation could build a stronger tax base by creating a new city better equipped to attract industry and business.

By avoiding duplication in government administration, consolidation will result in economy of scale and apply the brakes to rising per capita administrative expenses.

And finally, consolidation will insure the city will continue to be a part of the Greater Farmington Area and not an isolated island with an Orphan Annie role.

THE EXACT BENEFITS of consolidation cannot be specifically spelled out today. A charter commission must be elected before the specific advantages of consolidation can be appreciated.

We will never know if consolidation is the answer unless a charter commission is elected. If the charter commission does not find the answer, the Farmington Enterprise & Observer will urge a "no" vote on the charter.

But we urge a "yes" vote Nov. 4 as a means of seeking an answer. It is irresponsible to recognize a problem and not seek a solution.

The responsible city resident will vote "yes" Nov. 4 because to do otherwise would be accepting emotion as a valid reason for not seeking an answer.

If emotion wins, the City of Farmington will lose. We conclude with a final quote from the MSU report:

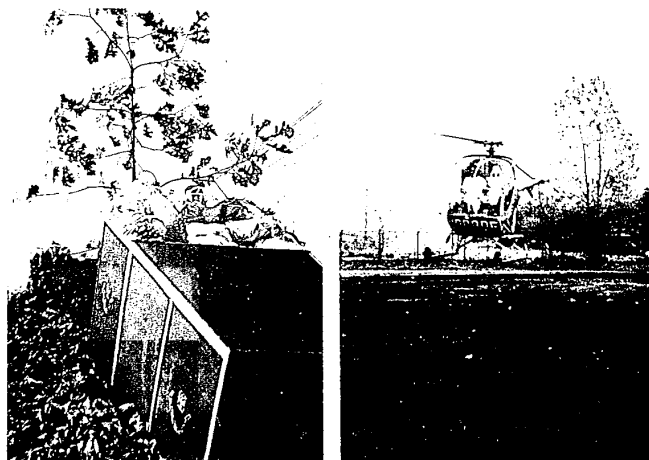
"We often fail to recognize the forces which affect the urban environment. Over a period of time we see only the results of the forces of growth and decay; consequently we often become concerned only after it is too late to rechannel these forces."

The Farmington Enterprise & Observer



THE QUEEN -- Kathy Robinette (right) reigned over Farmington High School's homecoming activities. Dave Kenerson is her escort.

(Evert photo)



PREMATURE BURIAL -- Farmington High's junior class had the prize-winning float in homecoming parade held Saturday. The float depicts a Livonia Stevenson football player in a coffin. However, Farmington lost 16-12.

(Evert photo)

IT'S A BIRD -- Farmington High's Phantom Falcon Mike Klepinger heads for a safe landing at Saturday's homecoming game. The Farmington squad struck for two touchdowns through the air, but dropped the game to Inter-Lakes Conference Champions Livonia Stevenson.

(Evert photo)

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