

# Farmington Observer

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## Mayor's plan could end low-income project

By MARY GNIEWEK

Farmington Hills may forfeit its proposed senior citizen housing development at Freedom and Drake roads, if a plan initiated by Mayor Earl Oppenheimer is accepted by City Council tonight.

The mayor is expected to ask that a zoning ordinance, which would have allowed for construction of low-income family housing, be returned to the planning commission for reconsideration.

The council had previously approved the ordinance on the recommendation of the planning commission.

The proposed housing development at Freedom and Drake roads calls for a mix of low- to moderate-income family housing and senior citizen housing.

Some authorities believe the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) will withdraw its support from the project if the low-income housing portion is dropped.

"The issue has to be restudied," Oppenheimer said. "I think this is the best way to go because it reflects 75 percent of the feelings of the people in the community."

Oppenheimer was referring to Tuesday's election results. Farmington Hills voters defeated several advisory questions about the housing issue. Council candidates who oppose the low-income housing part of the project won the most votes.

Low-income housing opponent Don Wolf, who topped the field of council candidates last week, applauded the mayor's decision.

"I think at least an attempt to satisfy the people is reflected in this action," he said.

COUNCILWOMAN Jan Dolan, the only Freedom Drake project supporter to be re-elected Tuesday, called the action a cowardly move.

"I think it's cowardly to send it back

to the planning commission. It's our decision to make, not the planning commission's."

The city has been working with MSHDA and RRCS project developer Bud Cline for the past year, but Oppenheimer said Cline has no formal contract with the city.

Cline, however, said "only time will tell" if he decides to file a lawsuit against the city if it pulls out of the project.

"This puts us in a precarious position," Cline said. "We have time and money tied up with the mandates of the city. I don't think MSHDA will fund it with just the senior housing portion."

Oppenheimer said he hopes MSHDA will proceed with the senior housing part of the project. He said the city could opt for a senior citizen housing development financed by a municipal bond sale if MSHDA pulls out.

But voters Tuesday also defeated a proposition which asked if the city

should borrow \$8 million to issue bonds for building senior citizen housing. A bond sale cannot be authorized without voter approval.

Oppenheimer believes the bond proposition got lost in the swell of advisory questions on the ballot.

"I don't think the public understood that to float a bond sale does not mean a raise in their taxes," he said.

WITH A city-sponsored project, rents would finance the principle and interest payments on the bonds as well as the operation of the building, according to Oppenheimer.

"Rents could be affordable to needy seniors, about \$225 a month as a ballpark figure, if the project was a low-rise which would keep down construction costs," he said.

Such groups as the Commission on Aging of Farmington and Farmington Hills will work to defeat a senior citizen housing development sponsored by

a municipal bond sale, according to Mrs. Dolan.

"As far as rents, when you start adding utilities, the costs soar above \$300."

"And voters already said 'no' overwhelmingly to the bond issue. We can't float bonds without their approval."

At a special council meeting Wednesday, the legislative body decided to take no action on petitions with 3,000 verified signatures of Farmington Hills voters which asked for a referendum vote on the zoning ordinance for low-income housing.

The city attorney maintained his earlier position that a referendum vote was not possible on a rezoning ordinance.

But Oppenheimer requested Wednesday that the zoning question be put on tonight's council agenda. He wants the planning commission to reconsider its recommendation in favor of RC2 zoning.

APPROXIMATELY HALF of the 11-acre parcel at Freedom and Drake roads is zoned RC2, permitting multiple density use. The other half is zoned RCE, a designation which precludes anyone under 60 years of age from living there.

When the city received the land gift at Freedom and Drake, it was given with the stipulation that if six acres were used for housing for the elderly, the city also could receive an additional five acres as a gift.

Because rents were determined to be too high for needy persons in a city-sponsored project, the city sought subsidies for its proposed senior housing development.

MSHDA, the lender in the proposed development to be built by RRCS Inc., added the controversial low-income family housing portion to the project as a condition for its acting as the lending institution.

## New method's lesson: To think fast in French

By MARY GNIEWEK

At first it looks like a parody of a television game show.

It begins with a host who eloquently reads a sentence in French. Then each member of the group must repeat it in a split second.

The animated host stands in front of a small group of students seated in a semi-circle and snaps a finger, darts a sharp glance, and looks wildly to the next person for a response.

A correct answer illicitly positive reinforcement: "Tres bon." The tongue-tied get a quick verbal lash. The game doesn't end until every member of the group says the sentence correctly.

It's called the Dartmouth method, and Harrison High School French teacher Pierette Orlich thinks it's the greatest thing since croissants.

"It provides a great forum for the kids who never raise their hands in class because it equalizes student talent," Mrs. Orlich said.

"It helps pronunciation. It gets them thinking in French. It's fun. If they say something wrong, everyone just laughs and they get another chance."

From New York City cops whose beat is Spanish Harlem to college students across the country, the Dart-

mouth Intensive Language Model devised by Romance Language Professor John Rassias is catching on quickly.

MRS. ORLICH, who learned the Dartmouth method at a University of Detroit seminar last summer, was told Harrison is the only high school in the country to incorporate the method so far.

"The method brings emotions into the classroom," explains one professor of its popularity. "Unless you feel a new language emotionally, the words won't come out when you need them."

Mrs. Orlich uses the exercise with all of her French classes about three times a week, 15 minutes a session. Group leaders are chosen by other students in the class on the basis of language mastery and pronunciation skills.

"It's up to the group leader to challenge them," Mrs. Orlich said.

"It's not high pressure, there's no hard feelings. It's just for fun and learning. No new material is presented in the sessions."

The Dartmouth model is already a hit at Harrison. School principal James Geiger has sat in on a few of the sessions to brush up on his rusty high school French.

After Mrs. Orlich presented a mock Dartmouth session to parents during an

open house, she was bombarded with requests to teach an adult night school French class using the method.

Harrison's German instructor Maria Schneider and Spanish teacher Donna Petrini plan to incorporate the Dartmouth method into their classes soon.

FOREIGN LANGUAGES coordinator Walter Scobie of Farmington High School said the number of high school students taking foreign languages has declined due to relaxed college language requirements. But he expects that trend to reverse in years to come.

That is, if a trend taking place on some Ivy League college campuses, such as Princeton, trickles down to the high schools.

"A growing interest in the ancient world, the classics, Latin and Greek, is returning students to the languages," Scobie said.

High school students in Farmington can choose from French, Spanish, Latin, German and independent study of Greek.

The first taste of foreign languages happens at the junior high level, where eighth graders can elect a language orientation class which teaches them the basics.



Group leader Nancy Whittemore zeroes in on Amy Freedland for a split-second response in a new technique devised to learn foreign languages

at Harrison High. Pictured at center is Karen Wilkinson. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)

## Farmington has its favorites

### Valium tops local drug market

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY and PHILIP A. SHERMAN

Editor's note: This is the first in a series on drugs and their use in the Farmington-Farmington Hills area.

The two-martini lunch seems to have gone by the boards in the Farmington area.

In its place, by a 3-2 margin, the drug of choice for a smooth ride home is Valium, according to an informal survey conducted by The Farmington Observer.

The fact that Valium is a widely prescribed drug for treatment of tension and anxiety is not news. But the amount of Valium being dispensed in this area might raise a few eyebrows.

The Observer contacted nine pharmacies and found that Valium crossed the druggist's counter, in ever-increasing quantities, more than any other prescription drug.

Runners-up in the pharmacological field were anti-hypertensives such as Diuril, antibiotics, most frequently Ampicillin, and anti-inflammatories such as Darvon.

According to the Physician's Desk

Reference, a doctor's guide to drugs which recently made the best seller's list, Valium "is useful in the symptomatic relief of tension and anxiety states resulting from stressful circumstances."

"It is useful in psychoneurotic states manifested by tension, anxiety, apprehension, fatigue, depressive symptoms or agitation."

And there's a lot of it going around.

"WE HAVE on hand at least 2,000 of the five milligram tablets," said Loraine Weininger, a pharmacist at Brown Drugs in Farmington.

"We can go through that in about a week and a half, depending on the season."

Gordon Brownell, owner of Brownell-Taylor Pharmacy in Farmington Hills, said he's been ordering about 5,000 units of the five milligram tablets each month. "It's been going on at the same rate for 10-15 years," Brownell said.

Just to put things in perspective, Percy McClain, the director of the pharmacy at Children's Hospital in Detroit, said that Valium accounts for half the prescriptions written through-

out the world each year.

McClain added that there are 3 billion prescriptions written in the United States each year.

"We (doctors and pharmacists) have really lost control of it," McClain said. "We're using more drugs in our society than we really need to."

That brings us to anti-hypertensives, used to combat high blood pressure and treat certain heart problems.

Ray Gibson, a pharmacist at John S. Pharmacy in Farmington Hills, said the drug Inderal was the most-frequently dispensed prescription medication in the store.

"I go by the fact that we buy these in thousands and continue to buy them in thousands month in and month out," Gibson said.

A lot of people in our area have high blood pressure and are under a lot of stress. Most of the people we work with are white collar workers or executives," he added.

Gibson also said that business is equally brisk in Valium and Tranxene, which he said is very similar in chemical makeup and effect to Valium.

Ampicillin, an antibiotic, was the highest-volume drug at Arnold's Drugs

in Farmington Hills. Antibiotics in general were also weighing in heavily at Bel-Aire Drugs and Concord Discount Drugs.

Druggists agreed that the weather accounted for a good deal of the stepped-up dispersal of antibiotics.

So what we have here, other than a good deal of tranquil people with sore throats, is an interesting set of questions arising from these figures.

Valium is being widely used, more so than anything else, in a 36-square mile area. Yet pharmacies across the cities are dispensing drugs almost on a geographic basis.

There also appears to be two schools of thought on Valium. Some pharmacists called it a "wonder drug," hinting that without it people would be streaming to psychiatrists.

Others disapproved of its use because of its misuse. "It's passed around like popcorn at parties," said one.

Another mentioned that in conjunction with alcohol, Valium has a lethal effect.

Part II of this series will deal with Valium and commonly prescribed antibiotics, detailing how the drugs should be used.

## School employees voted pay increases

The Farmington Board of Education approved a 12.9 percent salary increase for School Superintendent Lewis Schulman last week, along with increases for more than a dozen employees who work in the central school office.

Schulman's salary was upped from \$12,500 to \$148,000, which is retroactive

to July 1, 1979. A fringe benefit package is to be arranged.

Board President Michael Shiplee said the philosophy behind the pay increase was to keep the superintendent's salary competitive with other superintendents' salaries in southwest Oakland County.

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### BORED WITH FOOTBALL

If you've had enough of Monday night football, you can always get a change of pace by watching the excitement up at Farmington Hills city hall. The agenda for tonight's meeting is on 7A. Sometimes it's even better than Howard and Friends.