

Farmington Observer

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Pact forged to study commission goals

By MARY GNIEWEK

Two representatives each from the Farmington and Farmington Hills city councils will meet soon to redefine the goals of the 3-year-old joint Commission on Aging.

The commission formed in 1977 to establish community awareness and attitudes which promote the rights of the elderly was asked to resign Feb. 21 by Farmington Hills Councilman William Lange.

Lange said the resignations of the seven unpaid advisory commissioners

would be advisable "if we can't work together." He directed his anger at Commissioner Aldo Vagnozzi, one of four Farmington Hills representatives, who Lange accused of making a political animal out of the hot senior citizen housing issue in Farmington Hills.

In addition to Vagnozzi, commissioners Lynn Pheny, Roderick Smith and Anita Herman live in Farmington Hills. The rest of the commission, Joan Crane, Margaret Loidas and Dr. Joseph Gadaw, chairman, live in Farmington. Commissioners are appointed by their respective city councils.

"On the whole, I think they've stuck to their goals and tried to do what they've outlined for themselves," said Farmington Mayor Joanne Soronen.

"Let's see how it works when the two councils meet. The consensus seems to be: look at the goals established originally, see if they're appropriate or need to be changed."

"THE COMMISSION will have the opportunity for input after the two councils have met."

One objective of the commission, to hold public forums to identify housing

needs for senior citizens, has caused some consternation.

New councilmen Lange, Donn Wolf and Jack Barwell based their election campaigns last year on defeat of a proposal for senior citizen and low income housing at Freedom and Drake. The commission fully supported it.

Farmington City Manager Robert Deadman denied the notion that Lange's request for the commission to disband has caused ill feelings between the two city governments.

"I don't see any rift between the two city councils," Deadman said. "Farm-

ington Hills has a problem and is asking us to review it with them."

The two councils met informally last week so Farmington council members could greet the new faces who joined the Hill's team in January.

"The subject came up, we had some discussion, but nothing firm," said Farmington Councilman Ralph Yoder. "I told them not to fire our people. There's some personality conflicts involved. I don't think it's anything that can't be overcome."

Added Farmington Mayor William Harlock: "It is our position the com-

mission has done a fine job for us. There's no question they'll be serving the whole term. We're pleased with them."

"HOPEFULLY WE can have some input into the development of new guidelines."

The Farmington City Council will choose two representatives tonight to meet with and discuss commission goals with Farmington Hills officials.

Mrs. Soronen said her council will choose two representatives today or tomorrow then decide when the two groups should get together.

Board mulls millage rate for future

By MARY GNIEWEK

Citizens who've been storming city hall for Board of Review hearing dates on tax assessment hikes can breathe easy on one front: The Farmington school district may voluntarily reduce its millage rate in 1980-81.

At a preliminary budget study session of the Farmington School Board last week, Finance Director William Prisk said that higher state equalized valuations and new home construction may allow the district to levy as low as 32.8 mills next year, compared to 36.28 mills being levied now.

Because of the increased SEVs, an average of 20 to 25 percent and as high as 40 percent on some individual homes, the lower millage rate still would bring more money than the current levy.

"I recommend not setting a millage rate at this time because of the uncertainty of SEVs," Prisk cautioned the board of education.

He advocates waiting until readjustments are made following board of review hearings where residents can question assessment hikes. Those hearings are scheduled March 10 and 11 in Farmington, March 11 in West Bloomfield, and March 17 to 19 in Farmington Hills.

The 1980-81 budget projected at \$33,628,430 would allow continuation of current educational programs and provide some improvements. It is \$2.6 million over estimated expenditures in the 1979-80 budget.

THE DISTRICT covers Farmington, Farmington Hills and southern West Bloomfield. Officials project losing 578 students next year with expected enrollment at 11,977.

Approximately 87.6 percent of the budget will pay salaries and fringe benefits to school employees; 42 percent for utilities and gasoline; and 8.2 percent for textbooks, supplies, repair and replacement of equipment.

Prisk said that districtwide the SEV should provide a 21 percent increase. If his estimated SEV is correct, one mill should bring the district \$845,000. That would equal more than \$27 million if 32.8 mills are levied.

The rest of the revenue would come from the state, \$2,541,769; the federal government, \$848,688; and other school districts, \$2,479,144.

The district expects to begin its second year in September as "out of formula" which means it will receive only categorical state aid for such mandated programs as special education and transportation.

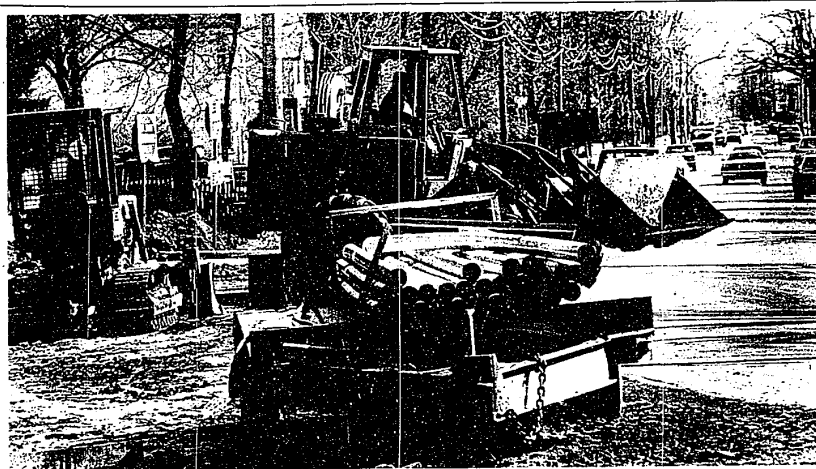
"The budget is balanced to the expenditures," Prisk said. "I haven't been able to say that in a long time."

Some of the additions expected next year: 14 more middle school teachers, 11 more special education teachers, 13 gifted education aides, and 11 speech correctionists.

During the study session, schoolteacher Marion Spencer questioned why field trips were eliminated while there's a 1,000 increase in athletic programs.

"This is a preliminary budget subject to change," said Superintendent Lewis Schuman. "Come fall every attempt will be made to bring back field trips. There's been a hold on field trips because of the uncertainty of gas supplies."

The board of education will adopt a preliminary budget March 18, with final adoption in October.



What's the problem?

That's the question drivers on Grand River have been asking themselves as their leisurely cruise through downtown Farmington has

been interrupted by construction work. Worry not, rush hour victims, the work will soon be done. (Staff photo by Randy Rortz)

Excuse interruption

Growth causes Grand River jam

Excavation crews contracted by Michigan Bell Telephone hope to complete underground conduit placement work along Grand River and secondary roads in Farmington by April 1.

The route goes west on Grand River from Power to Warner, then juts north on Warner to Oakland,

back to the intersection of Grand River, then continues along Grand River to the intersection of Drake Road, where an existing manhole will be reinforced with new conduits to accommodate new cables.

Underground water mains, two gas mains and sewers necessitated the alternate route from Grand River to Warner. The additional cables

are necessary to accommodate growth in subdivisions and the Farmington industrial park, according to Bell plant engineer Charlie Cox.

The crews will also remove a large air-strung cable at Grace and Grand River and put it underground.

"The reason we put them under-

ground is because they're unsightly up in the air," Cox said.

"Also it's better for security. If someone hits a telephone pole, it won't knock out phone service."

Though excavation work should be completed in a month, Cox said clean-up depends on when the frost is out of the ground and sod becomes available.

4 more years in '82

Ross vows to stay in Senate seat, debunks rumors

By MARY GNIEWEK

State Sen. Doug Ross, D-Oak Park, denied rumors Thursday that he will seek higher state office in 1982.

The Detroit News published an article Feb. 25 that said Ross, 37, whose 15th District covers Farmington, Farmington Hills, Southfield and Lathrup Village, is considering running for governor, secretary of state or Oakland County executive in two years.

"No, definitely not," Ross responded to all three positions. "They were rumors. The kindest way to put it is that (the article) was a speculative piece. I was not asked. They simply speculated."

"My very firm plans are to seek reelection in my seat in 1982. In fact, as evidence of my commitment here I'm going to be spending a good deal of time at the end of this year running my own mid-term campaign to report back to my constituents what I've done in the first two years of my four-year term," he said.

"If I was planning to run for something else, I would not undertake this project. I like my job and want to keep it."

Ross was co-director of the Michigan Citizens Lobby, a Southfield-based consumer lobbyist group, before he joined the Senate in January 1979.

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—State Sen. Doug Ross

In his first week of office, he called a press conference to denounce the use of junk food pictures in math textbooks which drew wide attention that resulted in a promise by publisher Scott Foresman to revise the series.

ROSS SUCCESSFULLY began drawing attention to his causes while still director of the non-profit citizens lobby. At a 1978 press conference where he asked for a moratorium on the processing of wasteful government forms, he posed for a photograph next to a stack of 20,000 different official forms and reams of red tape.

"After I've demonstrated my ability as senator and hopefully served the people, I certainly would be interested in running for higher office," said the University of Michigan and Princeton University graduate who also studied



DOUG ROSS

at the London School of Economics. "When you sacrifice concentrating on the job you have to do now speculating on the future, you do a disservice to your employer, who are your constitu-

ents," Ross continued.

The senator, who grew up in northwest Detroit, has limited himself to three major issues in 1980: helping senior citizens, protecting small businesses (Ross is former executive director of Citizens to Save Small Business), and riding government of waste.

Bills he has introduced in the Senate or co-sponsored with other legislators and hopes to enact in 1980 include:

- Renters inflation protection that would help senior citizens whose rent exceeds 40 percent of their income; providing seniors with the opportunity for a lifetime lease at a reasonable rent if their apartment is converted to a condominium.

- Revision of the single business tax so that small businesses with no profits would not have to pay any state tax; reducing the financial burden of businesses with 150 or less employees by not making the employer responsible for paying unemployment compensation to workers who voluntarily quit; prohibiting commercial redlining by insurance companies.

- Elimination of as much as a third of all forms and paperwork generated by the state. This bill would require that every form used by the state be terminated in 1981 unless it has been approved after a review as necessary and written in plain English.

"IT'S AN AMBITIOUS program but do-able," Ross said. "The agenda was set up in 1979. It's time to translate it into meaningful action."

Ross now has his own radio program on WCAR-AM radio. People Power, which premiered Feb. 8, can be heard each Friday afternoon between 1 and 2 p.m.

The show tackles everything from

consumer problems to how to be a better spouse or parent, he said.

"It's something I always wanted to try," said the man tagged as "another young Senate liberal with high aspirations."

"I believe strongly that individuals have power to get substantial control of their own lives," he said. "What we often lack is confidence."

what's inside

Agendas 2A
At Your Leisure 6B
Community Calendar 5B
Inside Angles 3A
Obituaries 2A
Sports Section D
Suburban Life Section B

BREAK THE HABIT

Tired of that dirty old habit of smoking? There are groups that offer some relief. To see how you might meet some success in this endeavor, turn to Page 2B.