

# Farmington Observer

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## Feds ponder Hills low-income housing

By MARY GNIEWEK

A local developer has applied to the federal government for an \$8.9 million loan to finance a Farmington Hills development that would include 47 units of housing for low-income families.

The plan was submitted to the department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) by A.J. Macksey. It includes 236 apartments to be built on the southeast corner of 14 Mile and Haggerty roads. The land is zoned RC-2, for multiple family housing.

Macksey is one of 19 southeastern Michigan developers vying for HUD Section 8 funds. Developers granted the low-interest loans must set aside a portion of rental units for low-income families. HUD then subsidizes those units. Currently funds are available to

finance 420 units in Michigan at an interest rate of 7.5 percent.

Mark Habel, a HUD multi-family housing representative, said a decision on the Farmington Hills proposal could be made in as early as a month or as late as the second week of August, depending on the cut-off date for proposal applications.

The proposal Macksey submitted to HUD would cost \$9.5 million to build. It would include one- and two-bedroom apartments in a complex equipped with a swimming pool, tennis courts, a clubhouse and a guard house.

The 47 units for low-income families would be two-bedroom apartments, of which 5 percent would be equipped for and rented to persons with physical handicaps.

TENANTS QUALIFYING for rental

assistance would have to annually earn less than \$17,700 for a family of five, \$16,850 for a family of four, and \$15,000 for a family of three. The tenants would pay 25 percent of their income for rent. HUD pays the remainder of the rental.

The remaining 189 units would rent at full market price, about \$440 a month for two bedrooms and \$370 for one.

Though preference to rent to local residents is permitted under Section 8 guidelines, Habel said a developer would not have to restrict his market to the community in which he builds.

"We don't care who they rent to, as long as they qualify," Habel said.

The Farmington Hills City Council discussed a letter from the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) last week which solicited

comments on Macksey's proposal.

SEMCOG acts as a regional clearing-house for housing proposals referring the information back to HUD in a strictly advisory role. The council voted 4-3 not to respond to Macksey's proposal.

Councilman Joe Alkateeb proposed notifying SEMCOG of the community's long-time opposition to any type of federally subsidized housing based on the results of several advisory questions on last November's election ballot.

He found no council support for that motion, although councilmen Donn Wolf and William Lange also voted against the decision to refuse a response to SEMCOG.

"I voted against it because I don't believe in making no response," Alkateeb said.

ALKATEEB DOESN'T consider the proposal something that has sneaked in the back door while the council has stood out front opposed to low-income housing.

"We've known all along that any developer on his own can go to HUD and obtain subsidized housing provided the parcel of property is properly zoned," Alkateeb said.

Following a bitter battle last year between opponents and proponents of a city-sponsored housing development at Freedom and Drake roads, the city council killed resolutions that would have paved the way for local control over that development. It was to be a mixture of low- and moderate-income family and senior citizen housing.

Habel said last year's housing controversy will have no bearing on Macksey's proposal.

"What took place last year is not relevant this year," Habel said. "This is another developer and a new proposal."

Councilman Earl Oppertbauer said commenting on Macksey's proposal would be only a matter of courtesy.

"Since we don't have a housing assistance plan, we have no control whatever," he said.

Joanne Smith, ousted from the Farmington Hills city council last year for her Freedom-Drake proposal support, called Macksey, "A very respected builder in our community."

"I only hope he qualifies with HUD. This is looking at our community realistically," she said.

Macksey was not available for comment.

## Middle schools to have mixed sports program

By MARY GNIEWEK

The Farmington Board of Education adopted Tuesday an amended version of Athletic Director Jack Cotton's proposal for an interscholastic/intramural athletics program for middle schools.

The board voted 6-1 to use a combination of interscholastic and intramural sports for seventh- and eighth-graders and intramurals only for sixth-graders.

Sports to be included are basketball, football, cross country, soccer, wrestling, volleyball and track. The program's ratio is expected to be 41.6 percent, interscholastic (competition between schools), and 58.4 percent, intramural (competition between teams in the same school).

Trustee Emma Makinen cast the only dissenting vote. She objected to interscholastic competition for 12- and 13-year-olds.

An amendment offered by Board Secretary Helen Frutow was supported by the majority of the board. It was based on a memorandum circulated to trustees from Board President Michael Spiece and incorporates the following into the sports proposal:

• Consideration of increasing membership of a Board of Control which will oversee the sports program to include parents, students, teachers and coaches in addition to principals of middle school and Cotton.

• The Board of Control should consider studying overall target levels of student participation, in keeping with the program's goal of maximum participation.

• Team cuts in interscholastic or intramural sports should be discouraged.

• Steps should be taken to assure that intramural programs have at least 50 percent of experienced coaches, prime facility time and other resources.

• Absolute equity between opportunities for males and females.

• Interscholastic games are to be held in the Farmington School District unless the Board of Education approves joining a league outside the district.

ONE PARENT supporting a predominantly interscholastics program complained at Tuesday's meeting that the program had been watered down to a compromise that will benefit neither interscholastic or intramural sports.

Cotton's proposal and another offered by Warner Junior High physical education teacher Sean Whalen have been the subject of controversy among parents, teachers, coaches and administrators since both proposals were forwarded in January.

While coaches are split in their support of the proposals, the Farmington Education Association, which represents Farmington teachers, threw its support to Whalen's proposal of an intramural-only program.

The Board of Education is in the process of adopting a curriculum for middle schools. Tuesday's meeting was the second time in two weeks the sports issue was addressed.

"NEXT WEEK when we talk about the reading program for middle schools, we'll probably have three persons in the audience," quipped trustee Dick Wallace.

On March 11 teachers, coaches, parents and students packed the board meeting room to argue both sides of the question during a study session of the board curriculum committee. After 2 1/2 hours of debate, that committee voted unanimously to recommend adoption of Cotton's proposal to the full board.

Administrators said Tuesday the basic part of the sports program in middle schools will be physical education, with two additional instructors assigned to teach it and increased options to students at every grade level.



A snow elephant?

Well, that's what the Gutowski family on Hidden Valley Court in Farmington Hills call this winter creation. Standing six feet tall, the creature was sculpted from residue left over from our only

snow storm of the year. With spring at the door, it's sure to be one of the last snow sculptures of the season. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)

## Unpaved roads treated with contaminated oil

By GAIL DE GEORGE

Half of Southfield's unpaved roads have been treated with oil containing toxic chemical wastes, yet no tests have been ordered on affected roads or wells to determine the level of possible contamination.

Road oil has been found to contain polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB), a cancer-causing chemical, in addition to lead and other heavy metals, according to Gary Hurlbert of the toxic materials division of the Department of Natural Resources.

"Any traces" of PCB, a chemical

used as a fire retardant and in electrical transformers, are considered hazardous by the Environmental Protection Agency, said Hurlbert. Michigan has traditionally used a concentration level of one part per million or greater as a danger level, he said.

Oil used on at least 24 miles of unpaved roads in Farmington Hills last spring was later found to contain traces of PCB. The levels of the chemical were under the state's guideline, said Michael Dorman, of Farmington Hills' assistant to the city manager. The DNR determined that the levels were not hazardous to public health, he said.

Both Farmington Hills and Southfield use Bill's Road Oiling Service in Ferndale, now known as Bill's Dust Control. It is assumed that the same contaminated oil was used in Southfield, said Roger Smith, director of public services. "We're going on whatever turns up in Farmington Hills," he said.

ALTHOUGH SAMPLES of the road oil in Farmington Hills contained PCB, the 17 private water wells tested by the Michigan Department of Public Health and the Oakland County Health Department were not contaminated, said Tom Marcucci, of the Environmental Health Services division of the county health department. No roads or wells were tested in Southfield.

Oil will no longer be used for dust control on Southfield's unpaved roads, according to Wescott E. Peterson, city engineer. After contacting William McCracken, acting chief of Office of Hazardous Waste Management of the DNR, Peterson is recommending to the Southfield City Council that all of Southfield's approximately 15 miles of unpaved roads be treated with chloride instead of oil.

"He (McCracken) did indicate strongly that some other method of dust control be used instead of road oiling," said Peterson.

Residents formerly could choose the method of dust control they preferred, said Peterson.

Approximately half of the unpaved roads were treated with oil. Oiling was a one-time, once a year application, using approximately 5,000 gallons of oil per mile, Peterson said.

Because no PCB levels were found in the wells in Farmington Hills, no wells in Southfield were tested, said Peterson. Further, McCracken indicated that testing was unnecessary if oil was no longer going to be used, Peterson said.

"We are not in the process of testing roads that have been oiled in the past," said McCracken, because of the number of roads involved.

He said he did not mean to indicate to Peterson that testing was unnecessary, but that the city would have to formally request that the tests be performed.

"IF IT WAS suspected that oil used in Southfield was contaminated in some way, it might be useful to look at it," he said.

Under the Hazardous Waste Management Control Act No. 64, waste oil, tra-

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## Public debates oiling

By STEVE BARNABY

Farmington editor With the dawning of spring come the traditional telltale signs — the days are longer, the weather warmer and the buds surface on tree limbs.

But residents of Farmington Hills have their own spring tradition — the annual public hearings on dust control for unpaved roads.

And this spring dawn, tradition followed suit. The Farmington Hills council conducted its first public hearing last Monday to determine the necessity for dust control on the city's 79 miles of unpaved roads.

A cost hearing will be on March 31.

While everyone — councilmembers and residents alike — agreed the necessity existed, the main topic of conversation revolved around the cost of oil. Its safety and advantages it has over calcium chloride.

Recently, it was determined that much of the oil used in previous years on Hills roads was contaminated with PCB. Tauter regulations combined with spiraling cost of oil based products has made oiling a more expensive proposition.

This year, according to Public Service Director Ralph Magid, it will cost residents more to have their roads oiled.

Last year it cost residents 26.5 cents a lineal foot to have roads oiled. This year that cost will jump to 36.5 cents.

The additional costs are due to higher cost of oil, testing for quality of oil and cold patching of oiled streets, according to Magid.

Also, because of more stringent regulation on oil quality, only one company bid to lay the oil.

"Oil suppliers are afraid of the unknown regulations," Magid told city council.

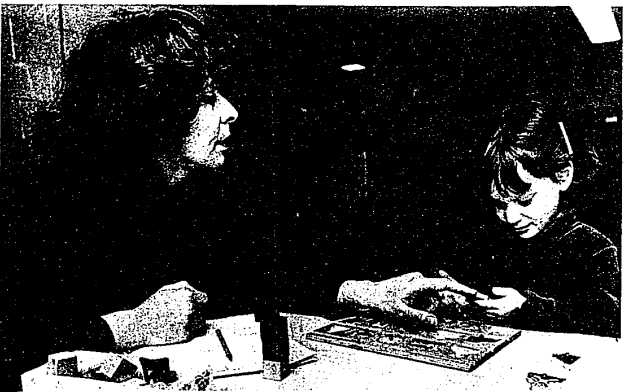
This is only the second year the city has levied special assessment districts to control dust through oil. Previous to that, only calcium chloride was assessed.

Homeowners who wished to use oil paid for it on their own.

Last year's actual cost for laying calcium chloride was 20 cents per lineal foot. This year it will cost residents 25 cents.

Resident Michael O'Hair questioned why the city was charging for cold patching oiled roads this year. In previous years it was not.

(Continued on page 4A)



Testing a tot

Georgene Kinsman, a speech and language pathologist, administers a test to Shirlee Berman, 4, at Fairview Early Childhood Center. Shirlee is one of 250 preschoolers scheduled for growth and development tests that will help Farmington Pub-

lic Schools teachers and staff in getting the tots off to a good start in school. Parents can still make appointments for 3- to 5-year-olds by calling 626-8335.

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