

# Farmington Observer

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## Citizens left in dark, demand action on park

By M.B. Dillon Ward  
staff writer

Community leaders and concerned residents chided Farmington Hills council members for their inaction concerning a proposed park site at Monday's city council meeting. Earlier, Mayor Pro Tem William Lange had tried to cut short the public meeting with an unsupported motion to go into closed session.

The council, without soliciting public opinion, last week endorsed in closed session Oakland County's bid for a grant to purchase 211 acres in central Farmington Hills listed for sale by Nicholas Spicer. The grant was denied Tuesday by the Kammer Land Trust Board.

Former Farmington Hills mayor Joan Dudley, former councilwoman Joanne Smith, the Farmington Hills Planning Commission and Farmington School Board president Janice Holnick were among those who packed city hall to support the city's purchase of the property for a municipal wildlife and recreation area.

"We take issue with what you did in executive session. You've taken action and ratified a letter (supporting a county park) before listening to the people who choose to speak on this," said Dudley.

"You're asking us to bet our future for a city park on maybe. We've come tonight to say we don't want you to support a county park."

"Maybe we'd be willing to support a city park with our tax dollars. You've never asked us what we want."

Dennis Fitzgerald, second-term chairman of the Farmington Hills Parks and Recreation Commission, ex-

pressed "great disappointment in the Council's decisions, which show no logical basis."

"The charge I'd levy is why don't you do something to rectify it? A letter was written quickly to support the county's bid. Just as quickly, you could take a step back and make efforts to get the property."

Responded Mayor Jack Burwell, "Should we say we'll buy it no matter what?"

"Your response," answered Fitzgerald, "is as irresponsible as the first one. You've given up the right of all of us to say that we want to get the land."

Speaking for the Farmington School District, Holnick said, "we are deeply interested in outdoor education. The piece of property that's available presents marvelous opportunities educationally."

FRED HARRISON, a founder of the Farmington Community Center, said he pledged \$1,000 towards purchase of the land during a recent Observer telephone poll on the issue.

"I hope the city sees fit to buy the property, and I wish to repeat my pledge."

Councilman Fred Hughes, to be installed as mayor in January, said, "this doesn't surprise me. There was similar discussion when we first discussed the property."

"Everyone can be second-guessed. We made a decision to investigate other possibilities."

A council-appointed study committee has met privately on the matter, with which Smith took issue.

"All meetings of the city are public. I don't care if four members of the council are the committee. I think you're in violation."

Hughes disagreed, saying that because "the people on this committee are pursuing the purchase of the property," their meetings can be closed.

"They are not charged with looking into the cost of the land. There's nothing secret about that."

"It wouldn't be the first time the council has done such a thing and been wrong," challenged Smith. "There comes a time you admit your mistakes honestly and forthrightly."

In saving part of the land for drainage (council earlier approved a resolution of intent to purchase 54 acres of the Spicer property for a storm water retention facility), you're playing a pitiful, ignominious role. You're demeaning yourselves in a way you shouldn't," Smith added.

TOO MANY CLOSED sessions have been held on this matter, said Aldo Vagnetti, Farmington Hills Democrat who challenged re-elected state Rep. Sandy Brotherton, R-Farmington, in November.

"The Open Meetings Act means you meet and act in the open. You made a major policy decision in executive session. Even now you retract your approval (of the county's grant request) retroactively. It doesn't alleviate the damage that's been done."

"This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, maybe once-in-two-lifetimes."

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RANDY BORST/staff photographer

The Spicer family is seeking homes for the horses and goats housed in this barn, which, along with the 211 acres it sits on, is for sale. Residents turned out in full force Monday to express their

disapproval of the Council's inaction concerning the site, considered by many prime park land. For more on the story, see Pages 14 and 15A.

## Abductions puzzle police

### Bizarre kidnapping reported: woman kept bound 24 hours

By Craig Plochura  
staff writer

Farmington police are investigating a bizarre kidnapping and possible rape involving a 20-year-old woman who lives in the Independence Green apartment complex.

The woman told police two men abducted her at knifepoint from a shopping center parking lot at Grand River and Halsted at 1:30 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 13, drove her to an abandoned house and held her captive tied to a wooden chair in a dark bedroom for 24 hours.

The men who kidnapped her left her in her car in the parking lot of a restaurant the next day, she said.

Police said the woman suffered such a shock that she may have blocked out some of the events of the day.

"It appears the victim had a memory loss of what happened inside of the bedroom of the house," said police Lt. Frank Lauhoff. "She's your average girl who, for some reason yet unknown, was picked up, and we're trying to find out why."

THE WOMAN, who works part-time at a Farmington Hills bar, told police the men forced their way into her car, shoved her to the floorboard and drove for almost an hour before arriving at the house.

There was no furniture inside except a hard-back wooden chair, she said. The men tied her to the chair with her hands tied behind her back, she told police. The men came in the room periodically to ask questions, police said.

One of the men asked, "Do you know why you are here?" When she replied she didn't, the pair said, "You're home."

The next day, one of the abductors drove the woman for 15 minutes and left her in her car, with the keys in the ignition, at a Stuckey's restaurant in Fowlerville. Police believe the second man followed the two to the parking lot and picked up the driver.

The woman drove home and collapsed on the doorstep of her apartment, police said. When found by her

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### 18-year-old tells Hills police of being abducted, threatened

By Craig Plochura  
staff writer

Conflicting statements by two roommates are hampering the investigation of an abduction believed to have occurred around 5 p.m. Nov. 20.

Jennie F. Girardin, 18, who lived at 21304 Ontario, told police she was abducted and threatened by two young men wearing ski masks.

She was walking south on Inkster Road when a car pulled up next to her and the passenger called her by name, then dragged her into a black Buick, she said. Driving her around the city, the abductors asked her if she had talked to police about the Nov. 14 shooting of her former roommate, she said.

They dropped her off after superficially slapping her cheek with a razor and warning her they were watching her.

Girardin said the abductors didn't want her to name the man who shot her former roommate Nov. 14. The roommate, Vicki Caudill, 18, told police she didn't know who shot her as she walked

along Inkster Road on her way to Tom's Party Store to get a pack of cigarettes. Caudill said she believes the shot was fired from a passing car.

On Nov. 14, Caudill was treated at Botsford Hospital for a gunshot wound. A .22 caliber bullet passed through her left shoulder. Police learned of the shooting from the hospital staff.

GIRARDIN TOLD an Observer reporter Tuesday she believed the two men who abducted her wanted to intimidate her to prevent her from talking to police. She said this is because she knows the identity of the person who shot Caudill.

She said one of the men threatened to inject her with fluid from a hypodermic needle. "I think it was to scare me," Girardin said. "He was going to (inject her with the needle) but the driver told him not to."

Police say they've been unable to contact Caudill to question her about the new information because she

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## Houses for sale to good owner

Maybe you're in the market for a new home — or a not-so-new home. If that's the case, the Farmington Hills Historic District Commission may have something for you.

Two 150-year-old homes are to be auctioned by the commission. The homes, which have been used during the past 10 years as auxiliary offices for Botsford Hospital personnel, are to be moved to make way for a medical building. The hospital board has donated the homes to the Historic District Commission. Bids on the properties will be opened at City Hall Jan. 20.

"Selection will be made on three counts," said Jean Fox, chairwoman of the Historic District Commission which will award the homes. First, site location; second, interest, background and experience of the bidder; third, dollar amount of bid. And the homes are to be used as single family residences only.

"So the homes will not necessarily be awarded to the highest bidder," Fox said, "unless he or she also has the best location for the home, and the personal qualifications. Where these homes are to be moved is of utmost importance to the commission."

By terms of the bidding specifications, available at City Hall, the homes must remain in Farmington Hills, where they have been for the past 130 years, and become part of the city's historic district.

THIS WILL BE the second time the homes have been moved. Originally, part of the settlement of Clarencville, they were built near Botsford Inn along the Grand River Road when it was the old Howell-Lansing plank road. They were first moved in the 1930s when Grand River was widened to eight lanes with a median between.

One home, a story-and-a-half early Michigan farmhouse, was restored by Henry Ford when he did his restoration of Botsford Inn in the 1920s. Frank Shaw, building superintendent for Ford who oversaw the restoration of Botsford Inn, lived in this house, which has since been called the Frank Shaw House.

The second home is a two-story, Greek revival house, which, in the hands of a knowledgeable restorer, will make an imposing home if sited on the proper plot of land, Fox said.

Packets with bidding specifications and particulars are available at the office of the Farmington Hills City Clerk, 31555 West 11 Mile, Farmington Hills, (474-5115).

"We believe this is the first time two such lovely houses have been given to a city and offered to the public at the same time," Fox said. "We are very grateful to the generosity of the hospital board, and are delighted these homes are to be preserved and kept in our community."



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

The early Michigan farmhouse (top photo), which was restored by Henry Ford in the 1920s, and the Greek revival house are both for sale by the Farmington Hills Historic District Commission.

## oral quarrel Do children suffer when folks work?

Farmington Public School officials estimate an average of 20 youngsters in every elementary school wear a latchkey to unlock the door when they return home to an empty home because both parents work or a single parent does. Responding to this trend, two preschool and after-school programs are being run by the YMCA under a cooperative arrangement with the school district.

The U.S. Department of Labor recently released statistics predicting 10 million youngsters will need day care by 1990.

This week's Oral Quarrel question is: Do you feel children of working parents who spend hours without direct parental supervision are harmed by their parents' absence? What can be done to improve the situation when parents must work?

Please call 477-5498 until 1 p.m. Friday to give a 30-second anonymous response which will be taped. Responses will appear in Monday's Farmington Observer.