



Farmlington Observer

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Council weighs millage hike, new budget

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

If Farmlington Hills officials approve a proposed 1.26 mill city tax hike, the 9.09 mills residents would pay in 1983-84 still would be one of the lowest city tax rates in Oakland County.

City council members are expected to adopt the proposed \$14.3 million 1983-84 budget at a special meeting at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday. Council members also will decide whether to levy the proposed 1.2675 mills (per \$1,000 of assessed value) increase. That would hike the current 7.8255 mills to 9.0930 mills in 1983-84.

The proposed millage increase can be broken down into several components: a new one-mill levy for capital improvements; a .269-mill increase in the city's debt levy; and a .2506-mill increase in the city's operating levy.

"Our city council cut taxes two years ago," said William Costick, Farmlington Hills assistant city manager. "They have been reducing them. Last year we had a lean budget."

In 1981, for example, Costick said, Farmlington Hills levied 8.50 mills and in 1982 dropped the rate to 7.8255 mills while still providing services such as garbage collection which many cities like Southfield don't.

But this year, because the state equalized value (SEV) of property in Farmlington Hills dropped almost 1 percent (from \$250.9 million last year to a current \$242.8 million), revenue from local taxes would drop without a tax increase. That fact is coupled with a 5.7 percent anticipated increase in the cost of doing city business in 1983-84.

THE DROP in SEV this year can be traced back to last year when a 6-percent factor was added to residential assessment. Based on sales market studies this year, assessments have been rolled back.

But, in opposing the proposed tax increase, residents last week asked city officials to trim "the fat" from local government as well as to cut services.

City officials, however, are quick to say that in 1982, of the average Farm-

ington Hills homeowner's approximately \$1,900 tax bill, only 16 percent of the total went to the city.

For example, in 1982, out of the 49.9 mills per \$1,000 of your property's SEV, you paid 7.8255 mills to Farmlington Hills; 33.7 mills to the Farmlington school district; 1.5 mills to Oakland Community College; 5.13 mills to Oakland County; and 1.74 mills to Oakland Intermediate Schools.

So, if you owned an \$80,000 home in 1982 assessed at \$40,000, your total property tax bill, based on the above rates, would be \$1,996. But only \$313 went to Farmlington Hills.

Of the remaining, \$1,348 went to Farmlington schools, \$205 went to Oakland County, \$70 went to Oakland Intermediate Schools, and \$40 went to Oakland Community College.

ONCE THE \$313 got to Farmlington Hills City Hall, however, it was allocated to the following services during the fiscal year:

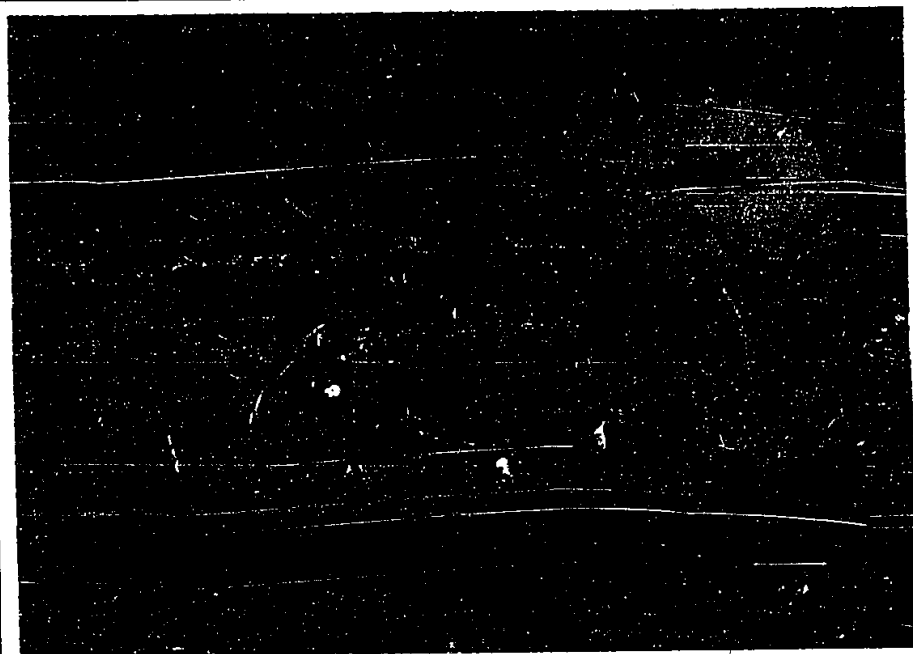
- \$13 to police/law enforcement.
- \$76 to public services, for example, local roads.
- \$34 to the Farmlington Community Library.
- \$31 to Farmlington Hills government operation.
- \$31 to fire protection and emergency medical service.
- \$18 to the city's debt retirement.
- \$9 to parks and recreation services.
- \$3 to the 47th District Court's operation.

So whether Farmlington Hills is compared on the basis of its 1981 or 1982 tax levies, it ranks near bottom for local tax rates in Oakland County, Costick said.

When Farmlington Hills levied 8.50 mills in 1981, it trailed behind Southfield's 17.48 mills; Birmingham's 15.25 mills; Farmlington's 11.25 mills; and Bloomfield Township's 11.13 mills.

Looking at 1982, the \$313 that Farmlington Hills residents paid out of their total tax bill can be compared to Oak Park's \$956; Southfield's \$648; Birmingham's \$600; or Rochester's \$525.

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It's a snappy happy contest

Amateur photographers should try to capture the color and quality exhibited in this poppy picture when they compete in the Observer & Eccentric color photo contest. "Nature in the

Suburbs" is the theme of this year's competition. Information on contest rules and details about this photograph by Norb Davert, 18, of Livonia are included inside today's newspaper.

Deadline is July 29

Don't shudder — contest is a snap

By Monte Nagler
special writer

Get ready, nature lovers. The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers are sponsoring a color photo contest just for you.

The theme of the contest is "Nature in the Suburbs." The idea is to capture the color of nature through your lens.

All you need to enter is a camera, color slide film and a "nature" subject that you believe properly typifies our theme. The photo may be taken in your own backyard, in a field, at a park or any place where you find nature.

Other rules include:
• Contestants must be amateur photographers. Observer & Eccentric employees and their immediate families are not eligible.
• Deadline for entry is Friday, July 29. Color slides must have been taken after July 29, 1982 and before

July 29, 1983. Each contestant may enter one or two color slides.

• Contestants are encouraged to send us the original slide. Entries will be returned only if accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. We stress that the Observer & Eccentric is not responsible for any lost or damaged slides.

• Please mark each slide with your name, address and phone number.

• Entries should be submitted to: Color Photo Contest, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150.

Following the July 29 deadline, a panel of Observer & Eccentric employees from editorial and production departments will judge the entries and select the winners. We will publish the winning photos in color in our Labor Day edition.

First-place prize is \$40 cash and the winning photo enlarged and

framed; second-place prize is \$20 cash; and the third-place prize is \$10 cash. Honorable mention certificates also will be awarded.

ONE EXAMPLE of an excellent "nature" photograph is shown on the front page of today's Observer & Eccentric. Norb Davert's poppy picture was taken last summer on the Georgian Bay in Ontario, Canada. He used a Pentax MX camera with his favorite lens, a 40-80 zoom positioned at the 80mm setting.

"Patience is important," said Davert, who waited for the sun to get in just the right position to highlight the petals and bring out full detail. "I shoot Kodachrome 64, rated at 80 ASA, to obtain deeper color saturation."

DAVERT, 18, of Livonia, has a unique eye when it comes to photography. He can be found outdoors

shooting many photographic subjects, ranging from the beauty of a single flower to the stark reality of the inner city.

Davert, a district manager for the Morin Building Products Co., already has had two, one-man shows in the area — at Livonia City Hall and the Northville Art Gallery. One of his photographs won a medal at the prestigious Scarab Club Exhibit last fall.

AFTER ONLY five years of serious photography, Davert now is the official photographer for the Livonia Visual Arts Association. And what about his future?

"I would like to continue to grow in an avocation that gives me great personal satisfaction," Davert said. "I especially like to capture designs, patterns and abstracts on film. These subjects present a challenge to me."

Judges seek funds to pay for postage

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Some Farmlington Hills residents want the city to operate less expensively in 1983-84 to avoid a proposed 1.26 mill tax increase.

On the other hand, 47th District

Judge Michael Hand last week asked city officials to reconsider some portions of the court's proposed budget, which is paid for by Farmlington and Farmlington Hills.

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Candidates face election issues

By Tom Boer
staff writer

It was question time in the cafeteria last Thursday when six candidates, all hoping to fill the one opening on the Farmlington school board, took part in a suburban political tradition known as meet-the-candidates night.

The candidates, all newcomers to elective politics, had an opportunity to field any of the 17 questions posed by members of the audience, who occupied about 80 chairs in Duocel Middle School's cafeteria.

One question not asked — but discussed after the meeting — concerned the effectiveness of a candidates night as a campaign tool.

for a one-person audience," said Board Trustee Michael Shipce, who's leaving school politics after serving two terms, "and that one person usually works for a newspaper."

Added Trustee Jack Inch, who underwent voter scrutiny at a candidates night just before he won a seat of his own several years ago, "You can't win here. You can only lose."

"There's just not enough of an audience here to win, but you can make a gigantic fool out of yourself if you're not careful."

Inch was quick to add that, in his opinion, none of the present six had made fools of themselves.

THE CANDIDATES are Todd S. Bates, Michael J. Barnard, Clarence M.

Gabel, Elizabeth A. Mihelich, Susan C. Rennels and Leonard M. Stein.

The top vote-getter in the June 13 election will serve a four-year term on the seven-member board.

The League of Women Voters, one of several sponsors of the event, required questions from the audience to be submitted for screening on three-by-five cards.

One question read, "If cuts had to be made due to lack of funds, what would you cut?"

Barnard answered, "It's always a tough subject . . . but four things I wouldn't cut are academics, special education, gifted programs and vocational education."

Stein, answering the same question, said, "I think we have great athletics

but if we have to cut, I'd say there."

Another question: "What might the school district do to meet the needs of the single-parent family?"

Said Rennels, "Expand the latch-key program (where a school is opened for supervised activities after school) and a working parent might not be home and continue to make odd-hour teacher conferences available. A concerted effort should be made to let the single parents know that their opinions and input are needed."

Said Bates, at 22 the youngest of the candidates, "I'm not even a parent. . . I have no answer, but I'd like to listen and I'd like to learn."

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"50 calls!"

"Must have had 50 calls! If I ever have anything else to sell, I'll use your paper!" M. Clark was delighted with the response of the Observer & Eccentric BOATS & MOTORS classified ad placed. Remember...

One call does it all!



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