

Farmington Hills Council hopefuls face the issues

Joe Alkateeb

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Former councilman Joe Alkateeb stands opposed to some of the actions of the Farmington Hills City Council.

"Our city council right now is wishy-washy," said Alkateeb, 45, councilman from 1978-83 and mayor pro tem in 1981. "I see things going on at the council that I am not in total agreement with."

Alkateeb, an electrical engineer who owns his own consulting firm, said the council's action on several recent issues is clearly "an example of poor government" and "lack of foresight."

For instance, he said, "no one said go back to the drawing board" when architects presented council with preliminary plans for a proposed 40,000

square foot police building. The building cost approximately \$45 a square foot. Most municipal structures, Alkateeb said, cost no more than \$30 a square foot.

"THEY PUT \$3.4 million in the budget (estimated cost of the proposed police building). That's why they need a tax increase. So they get everybody in the community mad. And all this could have been avoided."

Approximately \$160,000 already has been spent on renovating the existing police station, Alkateeb said. Instead of dumping into spending millions on a new building and allowing police to continue in crowded conditions, Alkateeb suggested moving some of the po-

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Joe Alkateeb

Jack Burwell

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Calling himself "fairly conservative," four-year Farmington Hills City Council veteran Jack Burwell said he uses his legal education and experience to make "mature judgments" for the city's future.

Burwell, a Southfield attorney, said "there are no what I would call 'pressing issues' in the city. But he pointed to the six-year capital improvement plan as an issue which needs more attention."

Before tackling the plan, Burwell said, city officials must first determine which projects have priority and how the projects will be financed.

Burwell, 53, called construction of a

new 40,000 square foot police building a top priority, as well as repairs on fire station No. 3 and the eventual construction of a fifth fire station.

The city's master storm drainage plan, he said, also is a top priority, with council having to determine soon how the needed drain improvements will be financed.

"We need to acquire certain property. We don't need it all at once. But we need proper locations for water retention," he said.

NEEDING A portion of the Spicer property near 10 Mile and Farmington roads is a major reason why the land should be purchased, he said. He pre-

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Jack Burwell

Joan Dudley

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Former Farmington Hills City Council member and charter commissioner Joan Dudley is disappointed in what she calls the current council's lack of leadership.

"I don't think they lead," Dudley said, as her major reason for seeking election to city council.

"I don't feel they are following the intent of the charter. There should be a blend of change and that is not happening."

In her criticism of the current City Council, Dudley, 40, the city's first woman mayor in 1977, listed several issues which she feels characterize

poor government and leadership. She served on the city's first council from 1973-77.

Council members seldom debate issues in public and convene for regular meetings to make their votes official, Dudley charged. Maintaining that issues facing the city should be debated in front of the public so residents have an opportunity to understand the reasoning for each member's vote, Dudley added that the council has "secret meetings — too many executive sessions."

"And I don't like the money they spend for retreats (in Ann Arbor). I don't like their attitude that they are

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Joan Dudley

Fred Hughes

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Farmington Mayor Fred Hughes says he tends to be a political moderate and brings objectivity to the current city council.

"I do not like devilishness. It does not solve the problems of the city, which is to provide services," said Hughes, 53. Hughes was first elected to the city council in 1981. "We want leaders to guide and lead in providing services."

Hughes, a former eight-year Planning Commission veteran, believes there are no major issues in this year's city council election. But, "There are needs the city has to face," as well as

how those needs will be financed.

Drains top Hughes' list of the city's most pressing problems. So the most obvious solution to the Hills' flooding and drain problems is adoption of the Master Drain Plan and then determine construction plans and how the improvements will be financed.

"WE WANT THE construction to minimize the negative impact on the community," Hughes said. "We are capitalizing on using natural storms and retention. So the plan is an enhancement to the city."

City officials are trying to buy land

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Fred Hughes

Melissa Levine

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Melissa Levine has few criticisms about the current Farmington Hills City Council. So Levine's decision to throw her hat into the city's political ring was gradual simply because, she said, "There was no one big thing that really aggravates me."

But the six-year city resident said that during the council meetings she has attended it seemed that council members "had their minds made up beforehand."

"I have to hear that other side (of

issues). So it (her candidacy) is just a matter of wanting to get involved."

Although Levine admits her inexperience in municipal politics, she points to several areas of concern.

Admitted increased taxes as proposed in June would have been difficult to bear for some Farmington Hills taxpayers, Levine says alternatives are needed to prevent the city from stagnating.

"WE NEED to afford to pay for the things to keep our city growing," she

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Melissa Levine

Terry Sever

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

If elected to the Farmington Hills City Council, local businessman Terry Sever intends "to work very hard" at settling up citizen participation groups. The groups would represent each of the city's 36 sections.

They would be appointed and elected by so one and anyone interested would be allowed to participate," said Sever, 33, owner of T.L. Printing Co. "I would encourage everyone to meet once a month to discuss the direction of the community."

The council then could "call on them to research and investigate issues facing the community, such as the purchase of the Spicer property," Sever said.

The groups, Sever said, could aid in turning Farmington Hills into a "representative government." The city pays a lot of money on projects that volunteers could work on, he said.

"I would like to see a more people-oriented government. We are not a Detroit. We do not have to pay for things that could be done by civic groups."

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Terry Sever

Donn Wolf

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

A vocal opponent of a proposed 16-percent local tax hike in June, Farmington Hills incumbent candidate Donn Wolf said he wants a "controlled city budget."

"I really think there is a temptation to overspend, a temptation to overtax," said Wolf, who was first elected to the City Council in 1980. He served as mayor in 1981.

Wolf said he was disturbed when city administrators "found a surplus" and "balked" when a tax increase was suggested.

"Too much surplus is bad," Wolf said. "I'm not sure we need all that money in the bank."

Wolf is a supporter of Richard Headlee's Voters Choice proposed amendment which would limit tax increases to those approved by public vote.

"WE HAVE gotten into the habit of spending," said Wolf a community and governmental affairs representative for Detroit Edison. "I think we will find out that if we spend less, we can do just as much."

But Wolf seemingly is not worried about city coffers because, he said, "When the economy comes back, the state equalized value will be going up."

Wolf pointed to the proposed building of a new 40,000-square-foot police facility included in the six-year Capital Improvement Plan, which calls for a 50 percent down payment on the estimated \$3.4 million structure.

"That is where the tax increase came from," Wolf said, adding that city officials could put only 20 percent down instead. "True, we will pay more interest over the years, but our income (tax rolls) will grow."

While calling for cuts in the city's surplus, Wolf said that projects listed in the Capital Improvement Plan, such as drainage, could be paid for with money in the reserve fund.

Wolf does not mince words in his opposition to Housing and Urban Development (HUD) money to finance projects, such as senior citizen housing, because of the possibility of losing local control. Besides, Wolf said, "that kind of money is running out."

SENIOR CITIZEN housing instead should be financed through private enterprise, he said. And Wolf claims that with dropping interest rates these kinds of housing projects are "becoming attractive to builders now." He contends that communities have "concentrated so much" on providing subsidized housing that we have neglected senior citizens who can afford their homes and want to stay in them.

"We have always forgotten those people before," he said, offering another reason for keeping taxes low so senior citizens can afford to continue living in their homes.

With unsubsidized senior citizen housing, Wolf said, the community can make sure that Farmington Hills residents are given the first choice in housing. With HUD-subsidized housing, Wolf claims the community loses that control.

As with most projects facing the city, Wolf specifically does not support levying additional taxes



Donn Wolf

to purchase the Spicer property near 10 Mile and Farmington roads, should the city lose its bid for a state grant to purchase the property.

But if the city is left without any other financial options, the question of levying taxes for the proposed park should go before voters. Wolf, however, thoroughly supports using a state grant to buy the land. Using about one-third of the Spicer property as a drainage retention area is a primary reason Wolf favors the land's purchase, he said.

AS MANY other candidates have suggested, Wolf agrees with seeking financial aid for the proposed park's purchase from the Farmington Public Schools as well as the county.

"I still feel the county can participate — financially," he said. "They should be approached. We do not have a major park down in this area (of Oakland County)."

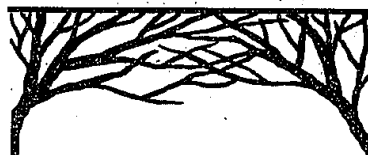
Construction of sidewalks and residential paved roads both follow one of Wolf's basic principles: "If the residents don't want it, don't force it." Despite his opposition to an ad valorem tax for sidewalks, Wolf nonetheless feels they are needed in certain areas of the city for safety's sake, particularly near schools.

Calling himself the "people's candidate," Wolf says he tries to do what the people in the community want. But "that is not just to get votes or to be popular with the people," he said. If he disagrees with the public consensus, Wolf says it is his job to show some leadership and convince the public of the need for a particular project.

Wolf's philosophies of self-government, however, also extend to making the City Council more accessible to residents.

"I had the feeling (when he was first elected) that the council was on one side and the residents on the other," Wolf said. "But we have started with a program to break that down."

That program, Wolf said, includes a newsletter, yearly calendar and when he was mayor, opening city hall on a Saturday so residents could stop by and talk. Sometimes residents took advantage of that and other times they didn't, he said.



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