

Fred Hughes

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throughout the city, including the Spicer property, to serve as water retention areas.

Although Hughes prefers taxing everyone to pay for the drains, he is aware "that there is always the problem with people saying 'But it's not my basement that is flooding.' But it (a citywide tax) is the most equitable and fairest to the citizens."

"It is going to be painful for people to accept. But we have to inform them, convince them of the need (for the drains)."

The city's six-year Capital Improvement Plan is as important to Hughes as flooding an equitable method of financing the needed drain improvements. But the mayor says the plan, which includes building a new police facility, must be reviewed again.

"THE CITY COUNCIL really did not affect a price tag," Hughes said. "The city must study each listed project, such as the police building, drains, sewers and sidewalks, another important city need, he said."

"We had a consensus that there is a need for sidewalks on the major thoroughfares in certain areas." The city has an agreement requiring developers to put sidewalks into their projects.

The problem from that agreement, he said, is that now there are only patches of sidewalk throughout the city, many leading nowhere. Now the council must find an equitable way to pay for sidewalks.

About a year ago, the council set up special assessment programs so residents could have sidewalks.

"WE THEN WANTED people to initiate petitions." It was apparent that either residents didn't want sidewalks or didn't want to pay for them, he said. "So we have to go back to the drawing board and then do a sell job with the community."

But the council failed to sell residents on the idea in June, he said. The proposed local tax increase could have financed some of the projects in the Capital Improvement Plan, such as the police building, Hughes said.

"Frankly, I think we did a poor job," he said, referring to the council's proposed tax plan. "We were kind of led to believe the citizens would accept this. We did not do a good job of selling the need for those taxes."

NONETHELESS, THE CITY council must be realistic about the facilities it wants to build and the improvements it wants to make, as well as how the projects can be realistically financed "without burdensome tax problems."

"What we are doing now is about what we should be doing only better, accelerating (development in the city)," Hughes said.

"I think the administration does a superb job in providing services for the city," Hughes said. "It is a good, efficient administration of city services," he said.

How the city is going to pay for the Spicer property will be facing the city council once it receives word on the state grant officials applied for to help buy the land.

"I THINK THE city ought to acquire the Spicer property. I think this is the opportune time."

Financing help also could be sought from the Farmington Public Schools, which has potential uses for the park, as well as the city of Farmington, Hughes said.

"I think we can benefit the whole community." One-third of the property could be used for a retention pond, he said.

On the other hand, Hughes prefers using private enterprise to provide senior citizens housing. "The city should be prepared to assist as much as possible." But the type of help should come in the form established when the city sold property to the Detroit Baptist Manor for a senior citizen housing complex.

A DIVISION MANAGER in financial management, Hughes has worked for Michigan Bell Telephone for 33 years. Because of his education in business administration, accounting and finance, Hughes says he "can relate to the financial areas of the city. I handle these financial areas better than many other people."

"I am willing to devote time and energy to study the issues and test them, bringing my experience to bear."

Married with three children, Hughes is the founding president of the Rolling Oaks Homeowners Association. Other community service includes serving as a trustee of the Council of Homeowners and the Farmington School Board variable mortgage task force.

Hughes received the 1981 Farmington Jaycee Distinguished Service Award for Community Service.

Joan Dudley

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"Big Time" government people — they're not."

THE PROPOSED acquisition of the Spicer property "summarizes the entire lack of leadership," said Dudley, a law student.

"They took the vote and then heard the public speak and she said maintaining that residents' feelings about the land's purchase seemed irrelevant. She also cited council members for dilly-dallying at the Spicer land purchase when the property was first offered to the city."

Although the city has applied for a state grant to help purchase the property, Dudley believes city officials should at the same time be discussing alternative methods for paying for the property. The 17-year city resident also says officials should be developing ideas for using the park that will conform with the city's Master Parks Plan.

"The whole point of a public hearing is to try to get a wide representation of the community instead of one faction," Dudley said. She contended that during both the Spicer property and proposed tax increase issues, only a portion of

the community's sentiments were made known.

"Because no one can foresee problems and issues that will develop, we have to be sure that the council is made of people who will resolve things in ways that are compatible with community feeling," Dudley said.

DUDLEY SAID the public has a right to expect city officials to be fiscally responsible and to spend tax dollars on projects, such as sidewalks, which benefit the entire community.

"Sidewalks, like storm drainage, is a necessity." She believes that both should be paid for with an ad valorem tax. "Everybody pays. Everybody benefits."

The city's six-year Capital Improvement Plan, which includes construction of a new 40,000 square foot police building, new storm drains and other drainage improvements, needs improvement, Dudley said. While council members succumbed to the pressure of a portion of the city's residents to heading down the proposed tax increase — including the one-mill levy for capital improvements — Dudley hinted that may have been a mistake. Although most residents' tax bills remained the same, the city took a back

seat to, beginning needed improvements," she said.

"A \$1 million surplus won't even fund one project (listed in the improvements plan)," Dudley said, referring to the council's decision to use reserve funds to balance the budget rather than increase taxes.

"We cannot continue to put these things off. Who is going to want to come to a community that is flooded out?" she asked, pointing to drainage problems in many areas of the city.

Dudley said that if the City Council had presented the facts about needed improvements and the accompanying costs, the city might be in a better position today.

"I HAVE confidence in the people. They are intelligent, interested and concerned," she said. "If they are given the facts they will be reasonable."

First of all, Dudley said, the council should establish priorities which "reflect the public health, welfare and safety" of the community. Establishing good communication between the residents and the city government could help avoid going "after problems piecemeal."

What the City Council needs to do as far as initiating needed improvements, Dudley said, is to come up with an

overall plan, including a time schedule, costs for each project, or combination of projects, if possible.

Although Dudley believes the public should have a say when it comes to the cost of needed improvements, which projects are so important that they simply must be completed.

For example, with the Master Parks Plan, city officials should figure out the entire thing — in front of the public — and then see if the public will vote to finance the plans.

"I just want to get things moving again," Dudley said.

"A lot of gains have been made by the (city) administration. But they are working in a narrow range of what they are allowed to do. I feel they are not being given the latitude to come up with proposals. If they do (develop proposals), the council doesn't want them. Policies are not being developed. The professional expertise in the administration is not being utilized."

Dudley is also concerned that the city is not doing enough to help businesses and merchants. Although the city offers tax abatements to encourage businesses into Farmington Hills, Dudley questions whether those businesses would find their own way here anyway.

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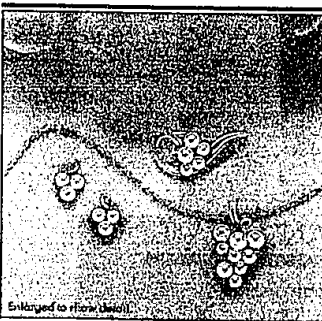
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