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Privilege practices questioned

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Councilwoman Joan Dudley demanded and the Farmington Hills City Council adopted a policy Monday requiring all councilmembers' requests to city employees for "non-essentials" and "great ideas" be channeled directly through the city manager and discussed openly at a public meeting.

"Have there been abuses? Yes, there have," Dudley said.

Although avoiding identification of councilmembers she feels have been guilty of straying from the city charter's rule against interfering with the city administration, Dudley reminded councilmembers she could be specific if the council failed to get the idea.

"Again, I am attempting to be as diplomatic as I can possibly be. It is not one of my finer points," Dudley said, when Mayor Charles Williams and Councilman Donn Wolf said they were unaware of any abuses.

Williams, Wolf and Councilman Joe Alkateeb related Dudley's suggestion of council abuses, as well as the need for a policy. But in the end Wolf joined Dudley and Councilwoman Jodi Soronen in an affirmative vote.

Councilwoman Jodi Soronen voted in favor of the policy. Mayor pro tem Jan Dolan and Councilman Fred Hughes were absent.

Before suggesting her policy, formed "in the spirit of the charter," Dudley pointed to examples such as councilmembers seeking information and "non-essentials" — plaques, certificates or mementos — from city employees.

DUDLEY'S POLICY calls for any council request to the administration or city staff for the "expenditure of time or money in carrying out the duties of city council members or the mayor to be brought to the city council's attention."

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Baby boom end spurs land sale

By Tom Baer
staff writer

It has been said of land: Acquire all you can, because they're not making any more of it. Farmington school officials must have had that saying in mind over the years as they bought more than 100 acres for future use.

But now that the great baby boom has gone bust and declining school enrollment is a reality, officials are wondering what to do with all that unused land the district owns on nine sites in the community.

The concern about the land holdings surfaced at a board of education meeting Tuesday at Harrison High School with a report on negotiations with the city of Farmington Hills, which wants to buy five acres from the district for \$2,500.

That land is part of a district-owned 24½-acre site adjacent to the city-owned San Marino Golf Course at 11 Mile and Halsted roads.

"Formally, this (the negotiations) has been going on since March of 1982," said board Treasurer Richard Wallace, a member of the board's building and site committee. "We've said we're willing to sell it if they (the city) can get the financing."

The undeveloped land "was bought some time ago when enrollments were still increasing," Wallace said.

"We were keeping it in mind for secondary purposes — a junior or senior high school," he said.

YESTERDAY'S SCHOOL officials undoubtedly had visions of expansion

when they bought the 40 acres at 12 Mile and Drake roads and the 12 acres on 11 Mile between Drake and Halsted roads.

"It was purchased on the population projections of the 1960s," said Trustee Jack Inch, chairman of the building and site committee.

But now the district serves far fewer students — 9,858 as of the "fourth-Friday" head count last September as compared to 16,556 during the 1971-72 school year.

By the 1987-88 school year, the report said, 8,800 students will be enrolled in the Farmington Public Schools.

And it's an older community: median age: 42.2 years in Farmington and 32 years in Farmington Hills, according to the 1980 Census.

"We're talking about a different community — an older community — than when the district bought that land," Inch said.

But district officials aren't rushing into any plan to sell all the land. "Most boards of education are very reluctant to give up land in case the future is such that they'll need it," said Farmington Supt. Lewis Schulman.

Added Inch: "If you divest yourself of this property and this (fewer children) does not turn out to be the trend, then you force another board to buy property at much higher prices."

SCHOOL DISTRICTS pay no municipal taxes on their holdings, and "There's minimal liability and maintenance."

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oral quarrel Should U.S. have ties with Vatican?

For the first time in 117 years, the United States will have full diplomatic relations with the Vatican, the tiny sovereign state which contains the seat of government of the Roman Catholic Church and the home of the pope.

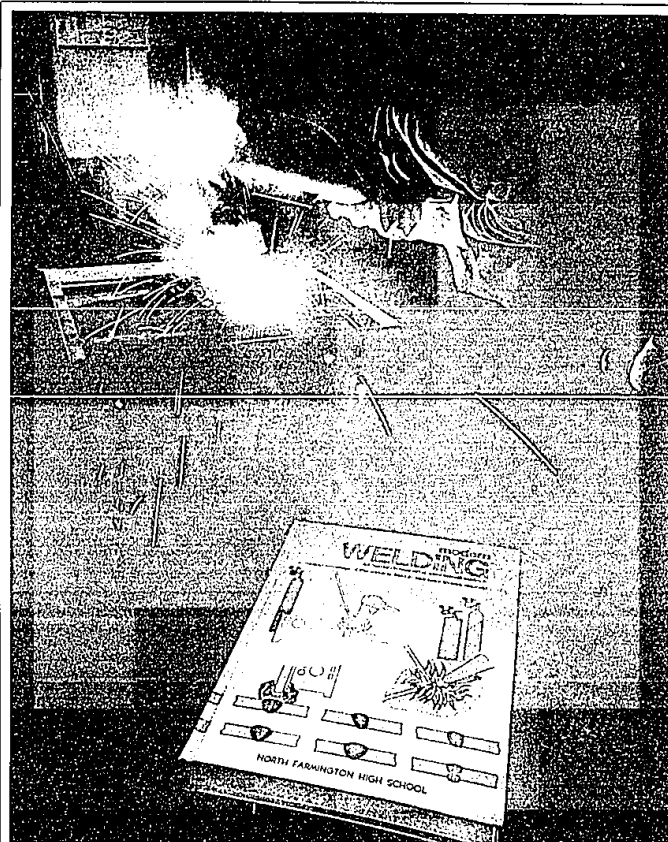
Some Protestant spokesmen have condemned the move, calling it a violation of the principle of state-church separation guaranteed in the U.S. Constitution. A State Department spokesman has halted the decision, claiming it was made "in the desire to

further the existing mutual friendly relations."

Today's Oral Quarrel question is:

WHY SHOULD THE UNITED STATES ESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE VATICAN AFTER A LAPSE OF 117 YEARS?

To answer this question, call us at 477-5450 anytime before 1 p.m. Friday, Jan. 13. To see how your neighbors feel about this issue, please look in Monday's Farmington Observer.



Welding and the way it is taught has become something of a family tradition for William Bowditch and his son, Kevin. The senior Bowditch was a student who first used this book back in 1942.

How writing a textbook turns to labor of love

By Tom Baer
staff writer

When it comes to welding — the process of uniting pieces of metal by heating them — Bill Bowditch could write a book.

In fact, Bowditch, a 52-year-old Farmington Hills resident and a high school vocational supervisor, has been doing just that for the past 23 years.

"Modern Welding," the textbook used by vocational classes at North Farmington and other area high schools, carries Bowditch's name on the cover as author.

Actually, Bowditch and his son, Kevin, 24, combined to revise the book, which was first published in 1942. It was written originally by An-

drew Althouse, a longtime shop teacher at Detroit's Cass Tech High, and Carl Turquist, his student.

Bowditch, vocational supervisor for Warren Consolidated Schools, has been involved in writing six revisions of the original since 1961. The 1983 edition contains about 750 pages "and about as many illustrations," Bowditch said.

The book "starts from scratch," according to Bowditch, and covers gas and arc welding and some new techniques like laser and electro-deposited welding and spot welding done by robots.

"A robot will hit within five-thousandths of an inch of where you want the weld," Bowditch said, "and it will hold all the conditions better than a human weld could."

WELDING SAFETY is emphasized, according to Bowditch.

"All the safety points are highlighted in red," he said. "For example, welders have to be careful of gases which displace oxygen and could cause persons to pass out. And some gas tanks could explode if they tip over, so they have to be chained upright."

Bowditch taught welding at his alma mater, Cass Tech (where he was one of Althouse's students), and also worked in industry "fabricating prototype sheet metal" in his words.

"Before welding, metals were mostly joined by riveting," he said. "That meant the metal had to be thicker and heavier because you had to drill holes in it."

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Council hopefuls sought

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Farmington Hills residents interested in vying for an appointment to the city council have until 4 p.m. Monday, Jan. 30, to submit a resume to the city clerk's office.

Applicants will be bidding to fill the vacancy left when former Mayor Fred Hughes officially resigns in mid-January.

In anticipation of the forthcoming vacancy, council members Monday agreed to advertise the vacancy in a legal notice. Applicants must be Farmington Hills residents and registered voters. Council members will interview all applicants at a public meeting Monday, Feb. 6.

Although last week Hughes announced his intention to resign from council to take a promotion with the newly reorganized telephone company, he has yet to specify when his resignation is effective.

Even though Hughes was recently re-elected to serve a two-year term, the appointee may serve only until the November election. The appointee would have to run for election at that time to stay on the council. If more than two candidates file for the November election, a primary will be held.

WHILE COUNCIL members unanimously agreed to accept resumes and interview the potential appointees, Councilman Joe Alkateeb called for council to first adopt a resolution detailing the procedure to be followed. Such rules, Alkateeb said, will make the appointment process "on the up-and-up."

"I am not sure what rules we can lay down," said Councilwoman Jodi Soronen, adding that there are few variations to the resume and interview process.

But Alkateeb said that in past years council set a precedent of not considering a person who lost in preceding elections.

Councilwoman Joan Dudley, however, told Alkateeb he was mistaken. Alkateeb council previously set a precedent in that former defeated election candidates were not appointed, that status did not automatically knock a potential appointee out of the running.

Soronen suggested listing in the city's legal notice what type of qualifications appointees should have although candidates could not be ruled out if they did not meet those qualifications.

"I don't see why we should spoon-feed these candidates," Dudley said, adding that the only qualifications should be those listed in the city charter (residency and voter registration).

Both Terry Sever, twice unsuccessful City Council contender, and Aldo Vagnozzi, Democratic activist, who have announced their intentions to seek appointment to council attended Monday's council session.

While Sever did not comment about the procedures council should follow, Vagnozzi told council members he would "hate to see an elaborate rule structure."

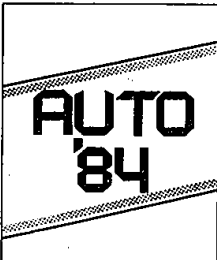
"If we had rules I am not sure if you would qualify when you ran for election," Vagnozzi said.

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Mayor wants citizens to promote city plans

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

It's twice-defeated Farmington Hills City Council contender Terry Sever's idea. But Mayor Charles Williams now wants a citizen committee established to help councilmembers study the city's capital improvements needs and to help sell the program to the public.

"I think they could be a very important role," said Williams, about the volunteers who would form a "liaison between the City Council and community. "Basically, it was Terry's (Sever) idea," Williams continued, adding that Sever also seems to be the most likely chairman of a citizen committee.

With the development last year of a major capital improvement plan, council members will be faced at budget time with developing priorities and methods of financing much-needed projects. Some of those include the purchase of the Spicer property, a proposed new or expanded police facility and major drainage improvements.

But Williams pointed to last year's successful push by a small group of residents to prevent the City Council from raising taxes.

"It is the no's who turn out," Williams said, adding that people who are in favor of increasing taxes to finance

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