



Farmington Observer

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Bar gets the boot from city council

By Steve Barnaby
editor

In what has become Farmington's cause celebre, the attempt to get Bootlegger's Bar out of town minus its liquor license, has moved to the state level.

In a unanimous vote, the council voted Monday evening to recommend to the Michigan Liquor Control Commission (LCC) that the renewal of a Class C liquor license granted to Pal

Joey's Inc. for the operation of Bootlegger's Bar should be denied.

The council action came after years of haggling between the city and bar owner Joe Asclone and -- most recently -- two public hearings at which city officials and homeowners testified to a litany of incidents involving the bar located on Grand River and Brookdale.

But the dispute could be far from over after the LCC ruling on the council recommendation, according to

Bootlegger's attorney Norman Farhat.

"Their recommendation was ludicrous. But I guess they did what they thought they had to do," he said.

Farhat labeled the upcoming LCC decision as "administrative" and one which will approve the Farmington recommendation.

"We'll definitely go to court," he said, noting that Asclone will be able to stay in business during the legal process.

"Some cases like this last as long as nine years," he said, although admitting that the Bootlegger case could be of shorter duration.

Asclone, through his attorney, already has said he wants to leave town. The dispute rests in whether he'll be able to sell his bar with or without a liquor license. Without a liquor license, Asclone's bar would be nearly worthless on the open market.

"HE (ASCIONE) WANTS wants out of the city and if they don't renew the

license, he won't have anything to sell," Farhat said earlier in the month at a public hearing.

Asclone's problems began almost immediately after he opened in 1981. Neighbors complained that parking in front of their homes was pre-empted by Bootlegger patrons.

City officials attempted to alleviate that situation by issuing parking permits to Brookdale residents.

But the rift continued as police received an increasing number of com-

plaints from residents about incidents by and between patrons in the bar's parking lot.

But the increase in drunk-driving incidents in 1983 spurred the city to take action.

Of the 234 drunk-driving arrests in 1983, 36 had been of people who had been at Bootleggers. Three of those people were under the legal drinking age, according to Public Safety Director Robert Seifert.

Mural is reminder of past

By Tom Baer
staff writer

The lines may not be any shorter, but at least patrons of the Farmington Hills Post Office will have something new to look at while they wait to buy stamps and mail packages.

A 30-foot-long mural depicting postal history from Pony Express to present was unveiled yesterday morning. Artist John Romans' creation will be a permanent fixture -- a latex enamel monument to the postal service -- in the space above the clerks' windows.

"It's really fantastic," said Dennis Stein, superintendent of postal operations at the Farmington Hills facility. "He (Romans) has shown it all from the stage-coach days to the express-mail situation."

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John Romans stands before the mural he painted at the Farmington Hills post office which depicts the history of the postal service.

RANDY DORST/staff photographer

Tax plan hampers plan to fix drain

By Steve Barnaby
editor

Farmington and Farmington Hills property taxpayers could be left holding a \$2.8 million bill for the completion of the Caddell drain if a proposed tax amendment is approved by state voters in November.

That was the word from Farmington City Manager Robert Deadman at Monday's legislative session, as he outlined to city council a plan to finance construction through the sale of limited obligation bonds.

"If the (tax) rollback were to occur, council would either have to immediately go to the electorate and request a millage increase of sufficient size to fund current levels of services . . . or reduce services to the point where they could be financed within the remaining millage rate," Deadman told city council.

The increased millage would include paying for the cost of the Caddell debt service, he said.

The proposed rollback is being touted by the Voter's Choice organization. Under that proposal, municipalities would have to roll back their millage rate to 1981 levels.

"There is no simplistic answers to our tax problems," said Councilman William Hartsock, as he lashed out at the tax proposal.

"Putting the Voter's Choice proposal on the ballot and requesting a rollback to an arbitrary date is not an answer to good government."

The present Farmington property tax rate is 11.74 mills. The 1981 level was 11.25.

THE SISTER cities have contemplated paying off the drain construction with limited obligation bonds -- paper which must be paid off within a city's maximum millage limit.

Farmington has a 20-mill limit and Farmington Hills a 10-mill ceiling. At present Farmington Hills levies 7.8 mills.

And while Farmington's 11.74-mill rate figures in the Caddell project, the Hills millage doesn't.

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Conservatives win tall-building battle

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Talk of increasing the height of buildings in certain areas of Farmington Hills to bolster the city's tax base has been silenced.

Farmington Hills City Council voted 5-2 Monday against paying \$1,500-\$2,000 for a study which would have shown how much tax revenue would be generated by high-rise as opposed to low-rise buildings.

The proposed study would have been based on increased building heights of 10 and 20 feet in industrial and large office zones.

Councilwomen Joan Dudley and Jan Dolan, who started the debate in late February, pleaded with the council until the final moment to move forward with the study.

The other five council members, however, remained unmoved. Most argued that the proposed study's cost was not worth its potential findings.

"I cannot vote for the \$2,000 study," said Councilman Joe Alkise, maintaining the study would show that few additional tax dollars would be generated from increasing building heights.

BUT BOTH Dolan and Dudley argued that council should have the facts

in hand before assuming increased height would not bolster the tax base.

"A denial of tonight's motion may be based on reasons I have heard in recent meetings," Dudley said. "Those reasons are assumptions."

"The truth, in my opinion, is always in order," she continued.

The study's results, Dudley said, could resolve the recurring issue of building heights in the city.

The proposed study was a revision of an earlier proposal from planners Villan-Leman & Associates.

Council was unsatisfied with the original proposal because it was too general and failed to consider that as more stories are added to a building, more land is needed to provide off-street parking.

In February, Dolan asked council to consider increasing building heights in specific areas to promote more intensive development for an increased tax base.

Throughout the three debates since that time, Dolan has argued that an improved tax base is needed if Farmington Hills officials and residents want to pay the bills and still keep taxes below the 10 mill charter limit.

Her concern, Dolan said, while asking how city officials planned to pay for major capital improvements, has to

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— Jodi Soronen
Hills councilwoman

do solely with improving the city's tax, not raising the skyline.

"With a stronger tax base you can keep taxes more in line," she said.

AS MONDAY'S discussion developed, however, some council members stated their strong support for maintaining Farmington Hills' low-profile skyline.

"At the moment, I don't see an overwhelming need to change the policy we have established," said Councilwoman Jodi Soronen.

"Looking at development in our city . . . some of the people who have developed in this city haven't used the full height available to them," Soronen continued.

Soronen's vote Monday was a turnaround after she provided two earlier nods of approval for studying increased

heights and tax revenue.

Councilman Robert Anzlov also changed his mind from the previous week when he voted to request the revised Villan-Leman proposal. Anzlov said he had since figured that increased height would increase market value (of the taller buildings), and consequently the tax base, by only about eight percent.

Councilman Donn Wolf's position, on the other hand, remained unchanged throughout the several debates on the issue.

"I'm opposed to it and I hope we stop it now," Wolf said, referring to any consideration about changing the city's height restrictions. "I still believe this is a low-profile community."

Only one audience member, Dr. Joseph Hovanessian, husband of Jillcann, president of Citizens for More Respon-

sible Government, echoed Wolf's sentiments.

"Let's not waste any more city money and time on this question," Hovanessian said. "Let's comply with the wishes of the people of Farmington Hills and stop this matter before it becomes an issue."

Hovanessian ALSO referred to criticisms made last week by Dudley about the defeat of advisory ballot questions in 1979. The ballots asked if senior citizen housing and industrial-research office buildings should extend beyond 60 feet in height.

"Unfortunately, some of you have chosen to ignore the desires of the people," Hovanessian continued. "Even the results of a ballot question in November of 1979 has been belittled."

"Some of you have referred to the 1979 advisory question as just a lot of rhetoric which occurred many years ago by a community of transients. Well, let's look at facts rather than make up fiction or let's not be driven

oral quarrel

Does Hudson's move hurt area?

Some Detroit officials, Mayor Coleman A. Young chief among them, reacted angrily after the recent announcement that the Detroit-based J.L. Hudson Co. and the Dayton Co., both controlled by the Dayton Hudson Corp., will combine their corporate headquarters in Minneapolis. An estimated 250 jobs will be moved from downtown Detroit to Minneapolis, beginning in May.

Detroit officials claim that the department-store chain is deserting an

area which helped it grow into prominence.

Today's Oral Quarrel question is:

WHAT ARE YOUR FEELINGS ABOUT HUDSON'S PLAN TO MOVE ITS CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS FROM DOWNTOWN DETROIT TO MINNEAPOLIS?

To answer this question, call us at 477-5498 anytime before 1 p.m. Friday, March 23. To see how your neighbors feel about this issue, please look in Monday's Farmington Observer.

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Record number declare as Dems

Farmington area Democratic activist Aldo Vagnozzi was ecstatic over the recent party caucus.

Not so much because of the results, but because he discovered that at least some 1,000 other people in the Farmington area lay claim to being Democrats.

For Vagnozzi and other Democratic faithfuls, those are big numbers in a community which is inundated with Republicans and their sympathizers.

"We even picked up 26 new members for our (Democratic) club," said the Farmington Hills resident. And although Vagnozzi, a Walter Mondale supporter, was pleased with

the state results, he saw his candidate go down to defeat in his county and hometown.

In Farmington Hills, Gary Hart garnered 449 votes as compared to Mondale's 288. Jesse Jackson received 18 votes, John Glenn 4. Three persons remained uncommitted.

In Farmington Hart won 157, Mondale 137, Jackson 7 and uncommitted, 3. Hart walked away with 50.6 percent of the county vote, 2,833, as compared to Mondale's county figures of 44.8 percent, or 2,497 votes. Jesse Jackson placed a distant third countywide with 3.4 percent, or 192 votes.