

# Farmington Observer

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Twenty-Five Cents

## Former Hills fire chief charged

By Tom Baer  
staff writer

A police investigation into a break-in at a Farmington Hills fire station has led to the arrest Wednesday of Lawrence Karon, the city's fire chief, on an unrelated charge of embezzlement of \$100 or less, a misdemeanor.

Karon, who resigned his office last week before the charge was laid down, stood mute at his arraignment before 47th District Judge Margaret Schaefer.

A plea of not guilty was entered for him, Schaefer said. He was free on personal bond.

Farmington Hills Police Chief John Nichols said that the charge against Karon was "a spinoff" of an investigation of a break-in into a locked cabinet in the headquarters fire station on Drake Road south of 12 Mile.

Nichols said that "somewhere between \$120 and \$130" was taken in the firehouse burglary. He added that there was "no perceived connection" between that break-in and the charge against Karon.

"While they were there investigating the burglary, some other information concerning another amount of cash which hadn't been accounted for came to light," Nichols said.

Nichols added that, while the investigation into the Karon matter is closed, the probe into the fire station break-in is ongoing.

The misdemeanor carries a penalty of 90 days in jail, a \$100 fine, or both upon conviction.

NO TRIAL date has been set.

Karon, a 44-year-old Farmington Hills resident, could not be reached for comment.

The announcement of Karon's resignation came last week in a press release from Farmington Hills City Manager William Costick.

"Larry's decision to resign from ser-

vice... is based on personal matters of health," said Costick in the release.

Contacted last Friday at a city manager's conference in Northern Michigan, Costick said that Karon resigned "of his own volition" after returning "the sum of money that was inappropriately handled."

"There was a cloud over some funds," Costick continued. "The funds could have been lost or stolen. At any rate, they were under his care. And the fact is that there was a sum of money missing."

"With that cloud there, I think Larry felt that the thing he should do was clear up the cloud. The sum of money

that was unaccounted for be returned to the city."

Costick said that the money in question came from the sale of "some excess, used, old fire equipment" about three years ago.

CONCERNING KARON'S resignation, Costick said, "Larry developed a great deal of stress, not only over this situation, but also over the operation of the department."

"I think that for personal reasons, and reasons of his own health, he decided to submit his resignation."

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Lawrence Karon former fire chief

## Cities ponder: To rise or not to rise

Editor's note: This segment on development in Farmington Hills deals with the debate among experts on the economic advantages and disadvantages of high-rise commercial developments.

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

Whether a suburb should have high-rise buildings or maintain a low profile is a matter for debate among city planners.

Farmington Hills, a bastion of political opposition to high-rise structures, stands in stark contrast to neighboring Southfield, which has a concentration of tall buildings.

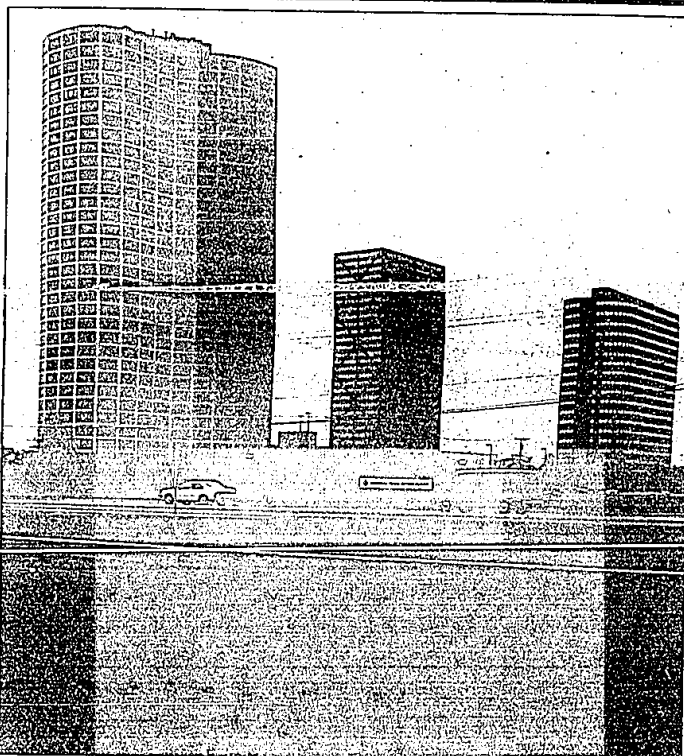
"Everybody has their own bottom line," Southfield planner Bob Henkle said. "Some like it (high rises). Some don't."

The contrasting skylines, however, have played a role in Farmington Hills' well-worn, building heights controversy.

The city's more vocal high-rise opponents use Southfield's "sky-scrapers" as an example of the kind of unattractive commercial sprawl that is unwanted in Farmington Hills.

While each approach has its advantages and disadvantages, economists don't support high-rises over three-story buildings, or vice versa.

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High-rise buildings, like the Prudential Town Center shown in the above photograph, dominate the Southfield skyline, while height restrictions prevail in Farmington Hills, the next suburb west.

RANDY BORSI/staff photographer

## Developers live with height limits

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

Like it or not, developers and builders have learned to live with height restrictions along 12 Mile and Northwestern Highway in Farmington Hills.

Some builders like Jimmy Jones or Jona Construction on Northwestern even prefer the low two-to-three story buildings.

"I've never cared for the high-rise buildings," said Jona, head of the family construction company.

"You have all types of people. Some want high-rise. Some want low-rise," he said. "But with a high-rise you have to park way out."

Douglas Etkin, president of Etkin Equities Inc., takes it from another angle.

"Our philosophy is that with proper setbacks, there is no reason not to go to six stories," said Etkin, developer-owner of Franklin Place on Northwestern.

"A six-story building would be a better way to develop."

But, according to developer David Johnson, owner of Pine Ridge Office Center on Northwestern, low, 30-foot-tall buildings are "a good concept," particularly along Northwestern.

"It (taller buildings) doesn't seem to me that it would be consistent or characteristic along the (Northwestern) corridor," Johnson said.

UNLIKE SOUTHFIELD'S skyscrapers which "make a statement," the low-profile buildings along the growth corridors in Farmington Hills maintain

the city's residential character, Johnson said.

"There is a fine line," Johnson said. "I think what Farmington Hills is looking for is a balance between commercial and residential."

Even though attention has been turned toward the growing office developments along the Northwestern and 12 Mile corridors, providing Farmington Hills with its own commercial centers, rent still lags behind that charged in Southfield's high- and mid-rise buildings.

"(Farmington Hills) is not known as strong a market as Southfield," said office specialist Jerome Reiss of Durand, Reiss, Murphy & Rembess Inc. In the typical Southfield high-rise, according to Jona, office space runs \$18.50 a square foot.

In Farmington Hills, on the other hand, rents are \$13.50-\$15.50 a square foot, according to statistics listed in the Detroit Office Guide, published by the Greater Detroit Chamber of Commerce.

With growing attention toward I-496 as a major highway network and plans for widening as well as talk of an additional interchange into Farmington Hills, offices along the 12 Mile corridor, for example, "might enjoy premium rents in the future," Reiss said.

Ultimately, however, base rents are determined by construction costs.

Construction costs increase or decrease according to the size, height and sophistication of a building.

"There's no doubt in my mind that buildings cost less when they are built

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## Schulman 'positive' after surgery

By Tom Baer  
staff writer

Low Schulman is feeling fine, thank you, but he's wondering about that special diet on which he knows his doctors will put him.

Schulman, superintendent of the

Farmington Public Schools these past eight years, is recovering at home after undergoing coronary bypass surgery July 18 at Detroit's Henry Ford Hospital.

The 64-year-old Schulman said that his diet and exercise program would be suggested when he meets with his doc-

tors this week.

"I don't know anything about the diet," he said last Monday from his West Bloomfield home, "but I'm sure it'll be things I don't like to eat — as always."

Schulman, whose surgery involved bypassing four blocked arteries, knows that his bout with heart disease will mean some big changes in his lifestyle.

"It mandates that you develop a firm, regular exercise program — and that's something I've never had," he said. "I know that it'll be very necessary and very good for me."

Schulman intends to return to his \$68,250 position as superintendent of the 10,000-student Farmington School District. But he couldn't say when. Last November, the board of education extended his contract to June 30, 1987.

"My doctors didn't speculate (about returning to work)," he said. "They wanted to wait a week or so before we talked about these things."

SCHULMAN, WHO has had few medical problems, became concerned about his health several weeks ago when he became tired and developed severe chest pains after climbing stairs.

"I elected to have the surgery," he said, "and I know it will turn out to be a wise decision."

A coronary bypass becomes necessary when vessels supplying the heart with blood become blocked. To bypass the blocked parts, doctors sometimes use veins from the patient's legs or chest.

Schulman said doctors took a vein from his chest and his left leg.

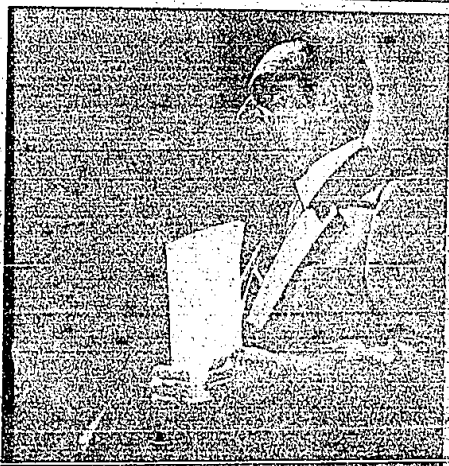
"There's less pain than I thought there'd be," he said. "You know, they take the vein from your leg and they cut you up pretty good."

"But, physically, I feel pretty good. I'm looking forward to coming back. I'm feeling very positive about everything. Right now, they want me to walk a little bit and take my pulse."

"I think what will result from my meeting with the doctors is a special exercise program, which they will design."

The surgery, which took about four hours, was performed by Dr. Donald Magidigan of the Henry Ford staff.

Originally scheduled for July 10, the operation had to be postponed because of a blood clot in his right leg. He followed his doctor's advice and operated table. He had open heart surgery last November.



Low Schulman "I'm looking forward to coming back. I'm feeling very positive about everything."

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