



# Farmington Observer

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## Council eyes millage hike for improvements

By Joanne Mallazewski  
staff writer

Farmington Hills city council members launched a trial balloon this week to test public opinion on raising the municipal tax limit for capital improvements.

A resolution to that effect comes on the heels of the November defeat of a request for an additional 1.5 mills above the 10-mill charter limitation in a vote of the people.

At present, the council levies eight

mills. The resolution would allow the council to levy the additional two mills to finance capital improvements in the 1985-86 budget year.

Six of seven council members who supported the resolution defined the implications of the action.

"It shows just a willingness, not how much (of an increase)," said Councilwoman Joan Dudley, who proposed the resolution Thursday at a special meeting called to discuss the city's capital improvements plan.

THE RESOLUTION "shows a com-

mitment" but it's "not in blood," Dudley said.

Mayor Jan Dolan, who earlier in the evening urged leadership from the council, agreed with the resolution.

"If we don't take the leadership now, we're only pushing the problem down the road," she said.

Councilman Donn Wolf, an avowed anti-tax advocate, opposed the resolution.

Although the council showed its willingness to raise taxes to pay for needed improvements, any increase would be

within the city's 10-mill charter limit, members said.

With the current 8-mill tax rate, city officials could levy up to an additional 2 mills for capital improvements, providing they don't raise the operating and debt levies come budget time in June.

The council's resolution came on the heels of comments from local residents involved in the recent unsuccessful push to pass a charter amendment to raise taxes for capital improvements. "We're not convinced we got the kind

of leadership from this council that this community deserves," said Harold Larson, chairman of the "Say Yes to Farmington Hills" committee.

THE COMMITTEE was formed last October to promote passage of a proposal that would have given the city authority to levy up to an additional 1.5 mills for 20 years for capital improvements.

Aldo Vagnozzi, committee vice chairman, also chided the council for what he considered an apparent lack of leadership.

"The one disappointment was that there wasn't the one so-called leadership group in the city," he said. "A city without a leadership core won't make the progress it should."

Another problem was that the council did not provide the community with a clear perception of where it stood on the improvements plan and charter amendment proposal, Larson said.

The defeat of the charter proposal was due more to the community's be-

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## Mayor vows solidarity for new year

By Joanne Mallazewski  
staff writer

In her first official duty as mayor of Farmington Hills, Jan Dolan urged council members to exercise leadership and team work in 1985.

"The success or failure of initiating and achieving programs for the coming year rests on the shoulders of each and every member of this city council," Dolan said, as she officially assumed her duties as mayor at a special meeting Thursday.

"PUBLIC LEADERSHIP must be exercised with intelligence, caution and self-restraint. But it must be exercised, for lack of leadership today will only bring greater problems for our city in the future."

Dolan's assumption of office Thursday represented the close of a year in which council was often faced with, as former Mayor Charles Williams characterized it earlier in the evening, "divisiveness and failure to work as a group."

In turn, Dolan urged cooperation among council members.

"It is my goal to see this council work into a cohesive group," she said. "This will require the assistance and cooperation of each and every one of you."

"There are times when we will have to compromise. We must learn to round off the sharp corners and to understand our colleagues."

Besides the responsibility of leadership in the city, council must also take responsibility for educating the public

about city programs and problems, Dolan said.

"We are in the unique position of having more facts and figures than the general public," Dolan said.

"When a proposed policy is considered to be good for the city, it is our duty to take a stand and to do everything possible to secure its adoption. A council member should be responsive to but not afraid of the electorate."

Following a year in which council has also been criticized for partisan politics, Dolan reminded members that, according to the city charter, council is supposed to be non-partisan.

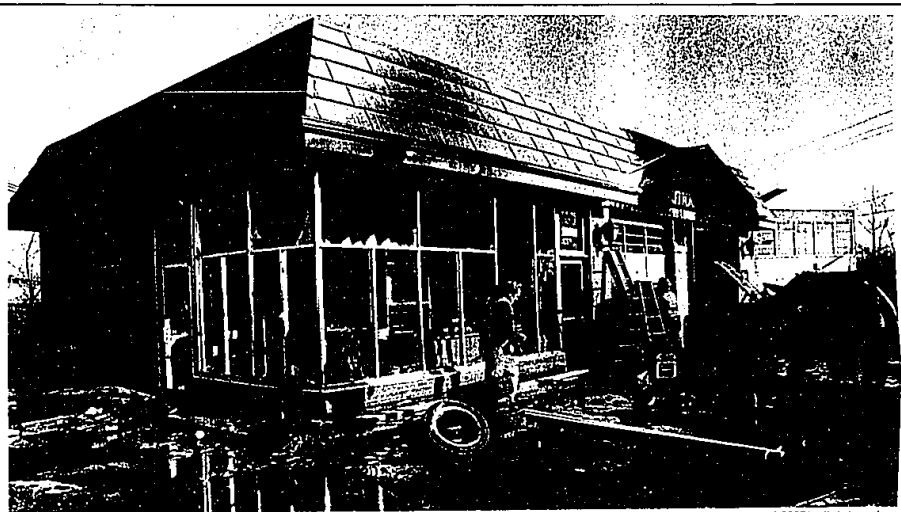
She urged council to "double their efforts in keeping faith with the charter."

LOOKING AHEAD, Dolan offered three suggestions as a means of getting more in touch with and educating the public and business leaders. Her proposals include:

- Advising local organizations that council members and administrators will be willing to address their groups "on matters concerning both them and the city. To avoid the appearance of personal political gain, I would ask that this be undertaken by all council members on a rotating basis as schedules permit."

- Making a concerted effort to have members of the area business community invited to several informal meetings with council members, city manager and department heads.

- Mailing a questionnaire to residents asking for their evaluation of current city services and programs. The questionnaire would also request residents' suggestions and constructive criticism.



Cleanup continued last Friday at the Amoco service station at Nine Mile and Farmington roads after a fire early that morning gutted the building.

## Fire sweeps corner gas station

By Tom Baer  
staff writer

Steve Hall, who owns the Amoco gas station at Nine Mile and Farmington roads, had a rude awakening in the middle of the night last Friday. "I got a phone call about a quarter of three," he said. "I came down here to find the place on fire and about five fire trucks in front."

Hall had to close his station Friday

after the fire of unknown origin gutted the building and ruined two wrecker-type tow trucks parked in the garage.

"I'm in shock right now," said Hall, who's owned the station for about three months after being a partner for several months before that. "We were doing a very good business."

No one was injured in the fire, although two Farmington public safety officers were treated for smoke inhalation

at Botsford General Hospital in Farmington Hills.

The blaze drew all three Farmington fire trucks plus a ladder truck from Farmington Hills. The station was closed when the alarm was turned in at 1:42 a.m. on Friday, according to Cmdr. Gary Goss, director of fire services for the Farmington Department of Public Safety.

"It was a big fire as far as we're concerned," Goss said. "When we got

there, the roof was super heated and going fast. We had to break out the front windows to ventilate the fire. That helped us put it out."

THERE WAS no danger of the gasoline stored in underground tanks igniting or exploding, Goss said.

"Those tanks are underground and totally self contained," he said. "Even

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## Strikers persevere cold streak

By Tom Baer  
staff writer

She had sore feet and cold fingers, but the middle-aged woman picket said she wasn't about to go back to her \$10.37 an hour job in the meat department of the Farmer Jack supermarket in downtown Farmington.

The woman, who refused to give her

name, was one of four pickets who hoisted their signs and marched along Farmington Road last Thursday afternoon to support Local 539 of the United Food and Commercial Workers in its strike against Borman's Inc., parent company of the Farmer Jack chain.

The union struck all 64 Farmer Jack markets in metropolitan Detroit at 12:01 a.m. on Dec. 29.

Strikers outside the Farmington store complained of "unfair labor practices," after Borman's declared an impasse in negotiations with the meat cutters union and imposed new contract terms, including wage and vacation cuts.

Management said it would be business as usual and that strike replacements would be hired.

"They want to hire in new people for low wages, and they want them to be part-time with no benefits," said the woman, who claimed she had 17 years with the company. "They're trying to get rid of all the full-time help."

Dave Strong, manager of the Farmington store, refused to comment on the job action. "Any comments will have to come through the main office," he said.

ROBERT EPSTEIN, general counsel for Borman's, confirmed last Thursday that the company had been hiring replacement workers. He called an offer made on Dec. 31 by Local 539 "a major step backward."

He added, "Since then, there have been several exploratory discussions,

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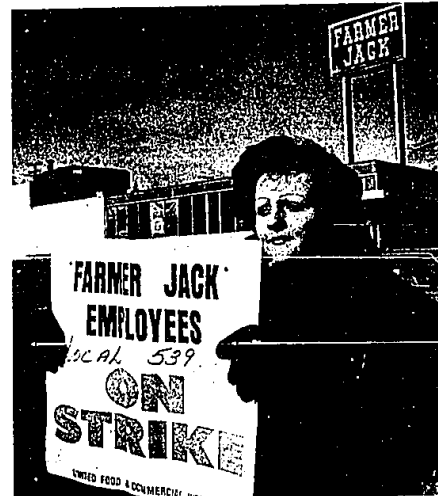
## Farewell party is planned for chief

A reception for retiring Farmington Hills Police Chief John Nichols will be 5-7 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 9, at the Botsford Inn, 2300 Grand River Ave., Farmington Hills.

Tickets, \$7 per person, may be bought at the Department of Special Services, at the Farmington Hills City Hall, or by calling and reserving the

number of tickets you desire at 474-6115, Ext. 281, no later than 4 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 8.

This reception, which will include hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar, will provide an opportunity to wish Nicholas well and acknowledge his contributions to our community.



Deborah Rles, daughter of a striking Farmer Jack worker, carries a sign in front of the downtown Farmington store.

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