



# Farmington Observer

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## Farmington Focus

### Park spots are a must, Hills says

By Joanne Maltazewski  
staff writer

Farmington Hills officials are making good on their promise to force developers to complete open-space park areas in some unfinished subdivisions.

As promised, city officials stopped issuing building permits for six unfinished Farmington Hills subdivisions after developers failed to complete open-space park areas by an Oct. 10 deadline.

The Farmington Hills City Council last week also approved extensions for three developers close to completing open-space park areas in their subdivisions. Council denied two developers requests for extensions.

"I am delighted the administration is recommending not to extend these permits," said Councilwoman Joan Dudley. "If we are going to protect people that buy into these subdivisions, we have to enforce our own schedule."

Council action follows a plan of beefed-up enforcement of the city's open space policy. The strengthened policy set Oct. 10 as the deadline for the developers of 31 subdivisions throughout the city to complete open-space park areas.

THE POLICY calls for completion of open spaces "based on a comparable amount of the neighborhood being built," said Richard Lampi, manager of the city's community development department. If 50 percent of the subdivision is complete, then 50 percent of the open space should be complete.

But the policy also requires comple-

**The policy calls for completion of open spaces 'based on a comparable amount of the neighborhood being built.'**

— Richard Lampi  
manager  
Community development

tion of open spaces five years after the start of the subdivision, regardless of how many homes have been built in the neighborhood, Lampi added.

Open space is an option available to subdivision developers. By providing planning commission-approved, open-space park areas in a subdivision, a developer can reduce the size of the individual lots, Lampi said.

To ensure developers make good on open-space park areas, developers are required to put the amount of money it will take to complete the park areas in a letter of credit or an escrow account, Lampi said.

WHEN DEVELOPERS do not complete the open spaces by a required deadline, city officials can withhold building permits and take the money in escrow or cash the letter of credit to complete the park area, Lampi said. The city can also issue ordinance viola-

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PAULY BORDY/staff photographer

### Pumpkin pickings

Jeremy Lovati, 4½, proudly stands next to a Big Mac pumpkin weighing 114 pounds and measuring 70 inches in circumference. The Big Mac was grown by Jeremy's grandfather and donated to his class at Alameda Early Childhood Center in Farmington Hills. The

Big Mac is a type of pumpkin that's known for its great size. But this isn't the largest one Jeremy's grandfather has grown over the years. As near as his grandfather can tell, the largest pumpkin he has had growing in his garden weighed in at 300 pounds.

## Council contenders air their views

See Page 3A for candidate biographies. See Page 8A for candidate profiles.

By Lisa Simon  
staff writer

Will downtown Farmington become a discount shopping haven or a chic shopping spot? Will giving downtown a face lift be impossible because of the high percentage of absentee landlords, or will shop owners be encouraged to improve store facades through an in-

### election '85

centive program?

In each case, what role will the city play?

These are some of the questions Farmington City Council candidates are grappling with in relation to the central business district.

The six contenders, who will vie for three council seats in the Tuesday, Nov.

5, general election, sketched their goals and qualifications at a candidates' night Oct. 9 in the city council chambers.

Alton Bennett and Roger Walker Jr. are seeking re-election. Challengers include former councilman and former mayor Richard Tupper, Economic Development Corporation member Arnold Campbell, Farmington Hills police officer Gerald Lynch and public relations specialist Elizabeth Mihelich.

THE WEST Bloomfield/Farmington League of Women Voters joined with

the Farmington-area Democratic and Republican clubs to sponsor the forum.

The debate was broken into two segments. The first featured a three-minute presentation by each candidate. The second provided a chance for the audience to ask questions.

Predictions for downtown improvement took top billing in the question-and-answer segment.

The "off-pricing," discount theme will evolve into a "more specialized, unique, retail area," predicted Campbell, a member of the recently reconstituted downtown steering committee.

Because of 80-percent absentee ownership downtown, it will take a long time to coordinate and upgrade the central business district, according to Tupper, also a strong supporter of improvements there.

count operation. She said she doesn't "think discount is what Farmington wants." A more-specialized business district will better meet the needs of residents, she said.

The "70s left a lot of people in the lurch, Lynch said. A "good bargain for a dollar is welcome," he said, underscoring that Farmington is not as affluent as Birmingham.

Farmington's hiring of an urban planner and a marketing consultant for input about the downtown's future was a move in the right direction, according to Walker.

Beautification will maintain viability, he said. A Downtown Development Authority comprised of downtown business owners is a good idea, he added.

Tupper, however, said: "It's difficult to come in with a plan and tell property owners how to spend their money."

REVENUE FROM both the county and the state are available for downtown development, Campbell noted.

"Admitting this (the emphasis on discount) isn't working for the time now," is a step in the right direction, according to Mihelich.

The city is operating on a plan de-

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## Expanded role Hills chooses new fire marshal

By Bob Sklar  
staff writer

A 10-year Farmington Hills Fire Department veteran is the city's new fire marshal.

Stephen Hume, 30, assumed the full-time post Sept. 30. He comes in in the part-time role of district chief at Fire Station 1, near 10 Mile and Research Drive.

Hume topped two other internal applicants for the job. "All tested quite well," Fire Chief Richard Martinot said.

The hiring process included the Michigan Municipal League Fire Marshal's Test, outside interviews and internal evaluations.

"The hiring process worked very hard," Martinot said. "He deserves it. He has gone out and prepared himself — and the city will benefit."

HUME, A 1973 Farmington High School graduate, earned a bachelor's degree in fire science from Madonna College, Livonia, and a master's degree in public administration from Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti.

In 1980, he was certified by the Michigan State Police Fire Marshal's Division as a fire inspector.

The lifelong Farmington-area resident left Sunday a three-week stay program at the National Fire Academy



Stephen Hume  
new assignment

in Emmitsburg, Md., near Washington. The program will focus on hazardous materials. "We'll learn how to apply local codes in regulating and controlling hazardous materials," Hume said Friday.

In 1982, Hume studied incident command — tactics and strategy during emergencies — at the Academy.

AS FIRE marshal, Hume will over-

see building inspections, public education and fire investigations. He'll work out of the Farmington Hills Fire Department Headquarters on Drake Road.

Hume views his new assignment as a challenge. "One with a lot of potential." "Building codes are often changing and you've got to be aware of the changes," he said. "Through better fire safety and code enforcement, I hope to help reduce fires and fire-related injuries in Farmington Hills."

Calling his promotion a good career move, Hume hopes to "address some things not addressed in the past."

One of his early goals will be to introduce a comprehensive hazardous materials program in Farmington Hills. "To like to identify and regulate use of hazardous materials in the city so we'll know what we're dealing with in an emergency," Hume said.

HUME ALSO hopes to improve public education "by reaching more people about fire safety."

"Many people in the United States really don't seem to care about fire safety, in comparison to people in other countries," Hume said.

What's the lure of firefighting, one of the more dangerous professions?

As Hume put it, "It's a job that has certain rewards and satisfactions. If you can help somebody, it makes you feel it's all worthwhile."

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