

Grant is eyed to improve city's museum

By Casey Hane
staff writer

The City of Farmington is applying for a state grant that would allow \$50,000 in renovations to the Gov. Warner Mansion. This would be the largest project in the Grand River museum's five-year history.

Robert Schultz, of the city said grant applications were due Nov. 1 and that awards were expected by the end of the calendar year.

This is the first year grant money — under Public Act 112, the Michigan Equity Program (MEP) — is available to municipalities with populations under 40,000. A total of \$2 million will be awarded throughout the state through this Department of Commerce program, said Schultz, of the city manager's office. Money must be used for cultural programs, tourist facilities or economic development projects.

Three project phases were outlined to city council Monday, as proposed in

order of importance by the Museum Committee of the city's Historical Commission. Electrical updating, additional parking and brick paving completion were addressed in that order.

City officials are hoping for a 100 percent award but divided the project into phases so a partial grant could be given if necessary. All were detailed in a report to the city council by City Manager Robert Deadman.

IN THE PROPOSAL, substandard wiring would be replaced, electrical amperage increased and electrical service extended to the newly completed gazebo and carriage house. This would allow expanded outdoor activities, more use of the carriage house and humidity control for exhibit protection indoors.

According to the report, present parking capacity is limited to eight cars; the second phase would add between five and 12 spaces. An engineering decision will be made during the

construction, because parking plans are structured around a tree on the museum property that must be considered, Deadman said. New spaces would be added to the present lot in the southwest corner.

Parking area drainage would also be enhanced, according to the proposal. A hedge-type planting will separate the parking area from nearby residences. The third portion of the proposal suggests completion of brick paving of the drive approaching the carriage house, providing an all-weather surface. A portion of this paving is completed.

Estimates of each project phase include: electrical, \$14,500; parking, \$31,000; and paving, \$28,000 — a total project cost of \$73,500. The city will offer an in-kind contribution of \$15,500 in employee time, leaving the balance of \$58,000 for the grant. The MEP program does not require the city to provide matching funds. "City employees will do some design work, and some grading and filling," Schultz said.

The balance of the work will be bid this winter, if grant dollars are awarded, and work will start in the spring and summer of 1986, according to Schultz.

THE MUSEUM, commonly known as the Farmington Historical Museum, was donated to the city in December of 1880 by the family of Edessa Warner Slocum, who died in August of the same year. Her father was Fred M. Warner, three-term governor of Michigan from 1904 until 1910. He was active in many programs including railroad regulation, child labor laws, direct primary elections and women's suffrage.

His father, P. Dean Warner built the Civil War-era home in 1867 at 33805 Grand River. Residents may recall the Governor's Ball fund-raiser held in May 1982, when horse-drawn surreys carried local people dressed in period costumes, reminding Farmington of its heritage and the home's distinguished residents.

When donated, the home was valued at more than \$200,000. The donation held a stipulation that the city purchase adjoining lots, and that the property be used for the public.

The city's historical commission

oversees its daily operations aided by the Farmington Historical Society. Present members of the commission's Museum Committee include chairman Charles Carvell and members Reta Mossamer and Margaret Walker.

Cost of city code raised

The Farmington City Code will cost residents \$50 instead of the previous \$15. The city council approved the change Monday after it was learned the books were severely underpriced.

City Manager Robert Deadman made the recommendation, noting a fifth supplement was recently printed at a cost of \$1 per book. This did not include, he said, other supplements or the original printing of the book. There have been 253 amendments to the 1967 code according to his report.

"Very few people (who purchased the code books) have asked for updates," he

said. A survey done through the city clerk's office found other municipalities charging between \$25 and \$60 per book. The city sells five to 10 books each year.

Also approved was an increase from \$3 to \$10 for copies of the Zoning Code. Deadman and his staff are reviewing recodifying the book, which he feels will take two to three years to complete with professional help. A copy of the City Code and Zoning Code will be kept in the library and the public will have access to copies at city hall.

Parking area may increase

Farmington City Council met in a closed session following Monday's regular meeting to discuss property acquisitions for additional parking in the central business district.

According to City Manager Robert Deadman, the city will now have preliminary discussions with the property owners, then a purchase offer may be made. If an offer is accepted, the sales proposal will be presented to the council for approval during a regular meeting.

Because of the subject matter, no information on the transaction has been made public. A public body is allowed to meet in a closed session to discuss the purchase of real property under the provisions of the Michigan Open Meetings Act.

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