

Pedestrian lighting — theme of forum

By Bob Sklar
staff writer

Farmington's Downtown Development Authority (DDA) will hold a special meeting Tuesday to finalize plans to bring pedestrian lighting to the central business district.

"We want something that brings downtown's historical nature to the

forefront, something that makes a visual impact without being gaudy," said Richard Donner Jr., co-chairman of the DDA's beautification committee.

"Right now, we have at least seven different types of light fixtures downtown. It's a real hodge-podge conglomeration."

The intent is for pedestrian light-

ing to complement existing street lighting, not outshine it. "Too much sidewalk-level lighting gives the appearance of a security problem," Donner said.

The DDA will meet at 8 a.m. Tuesday in the Farmington City Council Chambers, 23600 Liberty.

DONNER'S COMMITTEE is looking at two particular designs of Weisbach Lighting (see accompanying drawings). The designs were chosen after field trips to Romulus, Trenton, Wyandotte, Allen Park, Lincoln Park, Dearborn, Rochester,

Birmingham, Berkeley and Ferndale. "We saw a lot of mistakes," Donner said.

The committee supports a "period" fixture as opposed to a modern one to maximize the city's small-town charm. Remaining decisions include not only the brightness of the lighting but also the type of activation — photoelectric cell, timer or switch.

Because of funding considerations, the committee proposes limiting pedestrian lighting initially to both sides of Grand River, from Warner

to just west of Farmington Road — "an area where it'll make the most impact," Donner said.

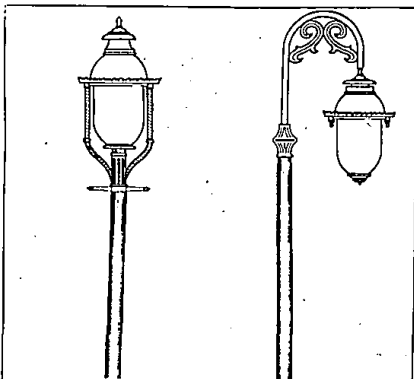
As part of the pedestrian lighting project, dead trees, missing tree guards and chipped brickwork along that stretch should be replaced, Donner said.

EACH LIGHTPOLE would have a

guaranteed outlet to accommodate Christmas-season lights. Costs could top \$50,000, based on preliminary estimates of \$2,000 per fixture and pole and \$5,000 for related streetscape improvements. Twenty-three poles would be placed roughly 55 feet apart, each separated by two trees, Donner said.

"We'd make sure the lighting design is compatible with other fixtures that merchants doing refurbishing could put on the sides of their buildings," Donner said.

The DDA had hoped to introduce pedestrian lighting this fall. "But I don't think that's do-able," City Manager Robert Deadman said. "But we ought to believe we'd be ready to go with a full-blown construction plan by the beginning of next construction season."



These are drawings of two types of pedestrian lighting under consideration by the DDA.

Yule lighting to be expanded

This year's Christmas-season lighting in Downtown Farmington will expand on last year's minilights theme.

The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) on Tuesday agreed to extend tree-hung minilights into the park at Grand River and Oakland and to improve minilighting at the Masonic Park, the Downtown Farmington Center Fountain and along Farmington Road, south of Grand River.

"There'd be a lot more impact if we carry the theme of the minilights through," said Richard Donner Jr., co-chairman of the DDA's beautification committee.

"We hope to extend minilighting to the east border of the DDA along Grand River to include the new shopping center that's being built, the Village Commons," said Robert Schultz, administrative aide to City Manager Robert Deadman.

The DDA also directed its Christmas committee to develop other options for emphasizing the four corners at Grand River and Farmington Road. "We'd like that intersection to get special treatment, but we don't know what," Schultz said.

THE DDA rejected the idea of refurbishing city-owned lanterns and draping them with garland — then placing them on downtown lightpoles.

Although money was one of the reasons for rejecting the lanterns, Donner had a further reason: "They look tired, old and dated. We need to expand on the good start we had last year."

DDA member Frank Clappison concurred. "I like the appearance we had last year. That's one of the first things we should do again."

Funding for minilighting hasn't been finalized, but the DDA proposed a combination of city and merchant contributions.

The city will pay for new lights, strings, replacement bulbs and extension cords. The Christmas committee will encourage merchants who did not install special outdoor electrical outlets last year to do so this year at their expense.

We acknowledge this kind of financial sharing is suitable for minilighting, Deadman pointed out. "I think we've got to come to realize we need some permanent sources of funding. Eventually, we're going to

have to bite the bullet."

The goal is to hang the minilighting by mid-November and light it by Thanksgiving, said E. Gregory

Hohler, Christmas committee chairman. Who will hang the lights is unclear, although volunteers may be sought, Schultz said.

Park building honored

Farmington Hills Department of Special Services' golf, grounds and parks maintenance division was named winner of the Award of Merit Contest in the maintenance building category by Parks Maintenance and Grounds Management magazine.

Jon Madden is superintendent of this division.

Designed for optimal energy efficiency, the Parks and Recreation Maintenance Building is adjacent to the city's Sun Marino Golf Course. Completed in March 1985, the building covers 6,000 square

feet and houses large vehicles, seed, fertilizer, mowers and recreation programming equipment.

The magazine runs yearly national contests to encourage efficient and attractive designs of shelters, restrooms, swimming pools and maintenance buildings. Winners, including the city's Maintenance Building, are featured within the publication.

Winners receive a plaque and are honored at a National Institute on Parks and Grounds Maintenance educational conference banquet.

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