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Future Farmington Association

Group Eyes Big Win After Three Setbacks

By EMORY DANIELS

the defeat of consolidation on Nov. 4, 1969.

This history includes some disappointments and frustrations, but association leaders remain confident that one community can be realized at some point in the future, provided the community does not despair and strides towards that goal one step at a time.

The FFA, led by Robert McConnell, is a community-at-large organization with its membership including representatives from both political parties and from all geographical areas of Farmington.

Listed among the board of directors are men and women who happen to be Democrats and Republicans. Although both parties are represented,

political affiliation has been deemed secondary to the primary goal of obtaining a unified community.

The list of officers and directors also includes residents and community leaders who live in the southern portion of the Farmington Area.

WITH THIS base, McConnell explains, the FFA hopes to present an objective, impartial outlook on annexation and other boundary questions and work actively for the boundary solution believed most equitable and suitable for all Farmington Area residents.

Present efforts are to defeat annexation, and this campaign is being conducted at great expense to the individual

members of the Future Farmington Association.

Filers are being distributed to three areas: City of Farmington residents who would see their city limits expanded; annexation passes; southern township residents in the area proposed for annexation; and northern township residents who cannot vote on the question but stand to lose half their neighbors.

The filers are just another expense which must be endured by the FFA treasury which already has expended thousands of dollars in legal fees in the court fight to keep the annexation proposal off the ballot.

The FFA, of course, is accepting donations mailed to its headquarters at 2838 Pepper mill Rd., Farmington, Mich. 48024.

McCONNELL SAID letters have been mailed to residents asking for contributions, but the response has been hardly overwhelming. He hopes that north end residents concerned over the loss of tax base, as well as their present neighbors in the south, will send in some money to help defeat annexation.

At times, money comes from unexpected sources in an unexpected manner. A few nights ago, Fred Fairfield was addressing a small group making an appeal on behalf of the FFA against annexation.

After finishing his talk, Fairfield was approached by a man from the rear of the room who handed him a check for \$50.

These spontaneous donations occur, says McConnell, but not often enough.

McCONNELL'S involvement precedes the actual formation of the FFA, and he has been the president of the association throughout its history.

Last October, McConnell filed petitions with the State Boundary Commission asking for the incorporation of the entire township including both villages.

The annexation petitions were filed by Richard Tupper the same date, but McConnell had the race, and incorporation became first in line if consolidation were to fail.

Consolidation failed. Although it passed by a wide margin in Wood Creek Farms and the township, passed in Quakertown by a narrow margin, a narrow margin of 245 votes in the City of Farmington vetoed the question.

The consolidation question had been pushed primarily by Citizens For A Better Farmington, an ad hoc group which filed for annexation shortly after the MSU Institute for Community Development issued its report recommending that path be taken.

But Citizens For A Better Farmington lost some of its leaders when consolidation was defeated. Some of the leaders departed to join in the fight to get incorporation defeated and annexation on the ballot.

Other leaders were discouraged by the defeat after a hard fought campaign. The morale of some became too deflated to

continue with the fight.

THOSE MEMBERS who remained with Citizens For A Better Farmington became convinced the fight must continue. But they soon realized their organization needed to be regrouped and reorganized before continuing.

The hard core which remained went out and recruited more members from a broader segment of the community. With a broader base, the leaders formed a group named the "Protect Our Boundaries" committee.

The initial purpose was to defeat annexation by convincing the Boundary Commission to place the incorporation question on the ballot for a vote.

The legal maneuverings of that lawsuit also involved a lengthy, interesting story which has already been re-

ported at length in this newspaper.

The result, in short, was that the FFA had suffered its second major disappointment. Judge Ziem threw out the lawsuit and ruled the state was correct in rejecting incorporation.

Judge Ziem also ruled annexation was a proper and legal question to be placed on the ballot. The battle strategy quickly shifted and became solely focused on that single issue—annexation.

MEN OF LESSER marrow would have beat a hasty retreat after being rejected by the State Boundary Commission and losing in court.

But even before Judge Ziem made his decision, a quiet, deep conviction had seeped into the spines of the FFA leaders.

The reorganization and clear statement of purpose had hardened the zeal of the FFA members.

McConnell and the FFA expect to convince voters that annexation is not the best alternative for the Farmington Area.

background

The incorporation petition was denied with the state ruling two villages and the township could be joined into a home rule city only through the process of consolidation.

AT THIS POINT, the leaders decided another shift in the organization was needed.

For the first couple months, the organization had limited itself to a defensive position only — to "save the boundaries" of the township.

Leaders decided to take a more positive approach and get back to the original purpose of Citizens For A Better Farmington.

The group then renamed it-

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Speakers Bureau

The Future Farmington Association has announced that it will provide speakers opposed to annexation for any meeting of residents of the Farmington Area. Requests should be directed to Association Secretary Barbara Benya. The telephone number to call is 474-3440.

Does City Want The South End?

On Nov. 3, election day, all voters from the City of Farmington and approximately 8,500 voters from the southern area of Farmington Township will be asked to vote on a proposal by the City of Farmington.

The proposition is that the city annex nearly 12 square miles of township territory, in other words that the city take over the township territory south of Ten Mile and east of Quakertown and the territory south of Eleven Mile and west of Quakertown.

Residents of the township north of the area proposed to be annexed have no vote.

WHO WILL BENEFIT if the annexation is approved?

The residents of the present City of Farmington have paid for their own city services over a long period of time. They have a city charter, 44 years old and last revised 19 years ago, that appears to be adequate for a city of 11,000. The government does a pretty good job of running its compact, small city.

It is true that some city streets need maintenance and that the sewage system needs modernization to end pollution of the Rouge River, but these things probably will be taken care of some day.

City of Farmington officials are campaigning to make their city nearly five times as large as it is now. We say "Officials," because we know of no citizens group from the city which is joining in this effort.

If the annexation attempt succeeds, can the same government which is now adequately jacking care of the needs of a small city spread itself sufficiently to handle the affairs of an area five times larger?

Less attention inevitably will be paid to the present city than to the pressing problems of the annexed area. They will be pressing problems, because the new city residents will

(Following is first in a series of articles, written and submitted by Future Farmington Association urging voters to vote "NO" Nov. 2 on the annexation question.)

Future articles submitted by the FFA will appear regularly in the Wednesday editions of the Farmington Enterprise & Observer between now and election day.)

apply maximum pressure to make city officials live up to the promises now being made at meetings throughout the southern part of the Township.

LET'S LOOK at those promises.

One of the first made was that immediately after annexation of the territory, the city will grade and gravel all dirt roads in the newly acquired territory. This is generally known as top dressing, but perhaps in this case it should be called "window dressing."

Knowledgeable people in the southern part of the township — those who have lived there for many years and through all kinds of weather — say that until adequate drains are installed, no amount of gravel and grading will do any good.

It smooths out the road temporarily and it looks better, but when the rains come, the road gravel washes off and helps to plug the already inadequate drainage ditches.

ROBERT DEADMAN, director of the Department of Public Safety for the city, has stated (Farmington Enterprise & Observer, Oct. 10, 1970) that in a three-phase program over a period of about six months, the city will hire 23 new patrol officers, one civilian, several detectives, youth officers and an animal control officer.

It also plans to establish a "staff bureau" to maintain records. The new manpower appears to add up to an additional 30 or more people, which is very impressive.

Nothing was said in Deadman's statement, however, about patrol cars and other equipment necessary for an expanded police force of this size. As presumably, as the size of the City government increases, more space will be required to house the growing bureaucracy.

That means either an addition to the City Hall, or perhaps a new building, with larger parking areas. And even though rubbish pickup is handled by an outside contractor, rather than by city trucks, the City DPW will probably expand, too.

EXPANSION is progress and progress is great. But where are the tax revenues coming from to pay for all this?

The area proposed to be annexed includes approximately 38% of the township's population and territory, but the tax base of this area is only \$78 million or 32.2% of the township's total tax base of \$236 million.

In other words, there will be less money per person to spend by the city than has been available to the township. How, then, can the city pay for its greatly expanded Department of Public Safety and

other expansion that will be necessary?

The answer is obvious — the increased services promised to the southern part of the township can only be paid for with increased revenue. That means higher taxes.

Even if the city increases the taxes of the former township residents only to the current tax rate of city residents, the increase will amount to 8.5% of their township tax bill, including all school taxes.

THE NUMBER of homes per acre in the city is higher than in the township. If the city permits a greater number of homes on the undeveloped township land it takes over, and if the township has to do the same thing to make up for the potential value of the lost industrial tax base, the school population most certainly will increase.

Greater school population means more schools, more teachers and more school taxes. About three-quarters of total property taxes paid by township residents and two-thirds of taxes paid by city residents go to the Farmington School District. An increase in these taxes will hit every pocketbook in the entire Farmington area.

LET'S GO BACK to the first question we asked: Who will benefit if the annexation is approved?

Will residents of the city be better off when their government has to spread itself thin to take care of a lot of new problems? Are residents of the southern part of the Township, expecting their taxes to be increased to pay for services generously promised by City officials?

And will all residents of the Farmington Area benefit if school taxes are raised because present zoning restrictions are relaxed, thus permitting a larger school population?

Seek Woman For Fraud

Farmington Township Police are investigating charges of fraud against Dolores Sibrano, of 22817 Wohlfield, Taylor.

Police said Miss Sibrano allegedly presented checks worth \$1,250 at the Commonwealth Bank, 24200 Middle Belt, Farmington Township, saying she had funds on deposit at another branch bank on Cherry Hill and Venoy in Garden City.

She allegedly brought the cashier's check issued at the Farmington bank to Dameron Motor Sales, Grand River and Middle Belt, Farmington, to purchase a car.

The Garden City branch bank returned the check marked "insufficient funds."

Police issued a warrant for her arrest and speculated her scheme to defraud the bank in Farmington Township.

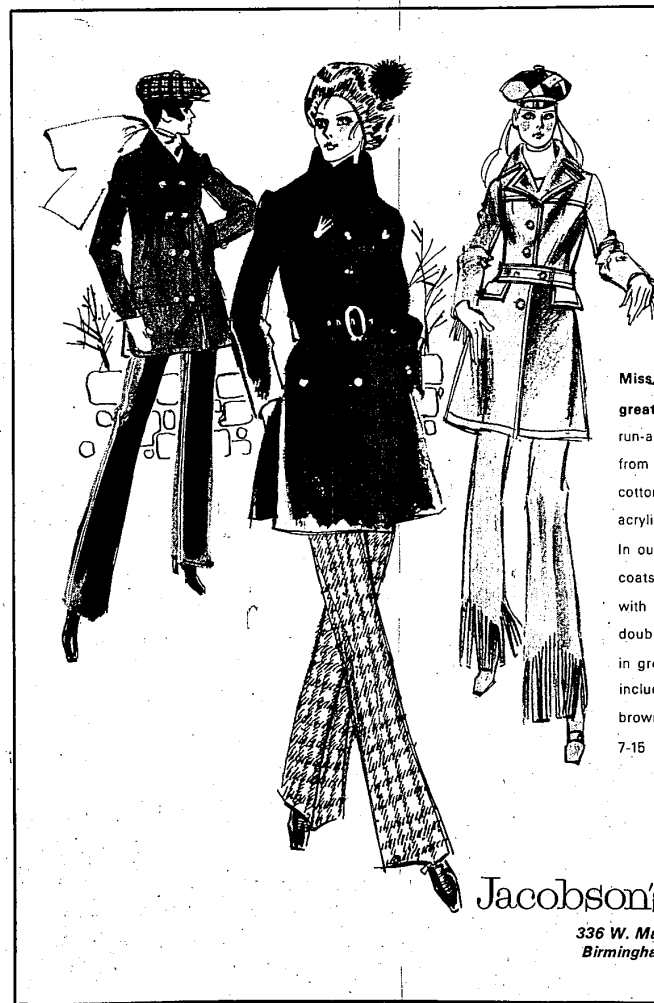
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