

City officials uncertain about new building

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

The idea of a brand new building in Heritage Park for the growing Farmington Hills special services department was not overwhelmingly embraced by the city council last week.

With plans for moving the offices into the 62-year-old Eleanor Spicer estate house pretty much a dead issue — because of prohibitive cost — city administrators suggested building a single-story, 5,000-square-foot office northwest of the new park entrance off Farmington Road.

"This (Heritage Park) is going to be the flagship of the parks development," special services director Daniel Potter told city council members and parks and recreation commissioners at a special joint meeting Monday.

"This seems to be the practical location of that facility," Potter continued.

The office building could be built behind a line of trees so it would remain hidden from residents on the east side of Farmington Road. A

parking lot for the building also would be hidden from view, Potter said.

City manager William Costick said new offices were considered because staff, particularly in parks and recreation, could be in the center of the city's park development. New offices also could include a classroom and lavatories.

Costick told council members and commissioners that he figures paying for the building at \$20,000-\$40,000 over 15-20 years.

MAYOR DEN Marks questioned building only 5,000 square feet.

"Would you mind considering a two-story colonial?" he asked. Colonial architecture would be consistent with the heritage theme of the park. A two-story building generally is less expensive than a ranch-style, he added.

"I don't like 5,000 being the number because you might need more. That's been a problem with Farmington Hills planning — building only for today," Marks continued. Costick responded that he believed 5,000 square feet would accommo-

date future growth. A two-story building, however, would require an elevator, he said.

Though Marks agreed there is a great need for space for administrative offices, not all council members were convinced that a new building should be constructed.

"I would really want to be convinced we need a new building," councilman Aldo Vagnozzi said.

When the new police building was built, he continued, city officials said it would free up space in city hall and the old police building for expanded offices.

Vagnozzi also said he believes special services should remain in city hall. "I'd hate to see that much money spent on something I don't think we need," he said. "I still think the department belongs in city hall. I don't think we should require people to go to three-to-four places to avail themselves of services."

COUNCILMAN JOE Alkateeb agreed. "I also think parks and recreation belongs there (city hall)," he said, nonetheless adding that he doesn't mind an outer office.

Costick, however, continued to

stress that despite relocation of offices into the former police building, city hall remains cramped. The city council last week authorized continued planning for remodeling city hall. About \$100,000 has been budgeted for remodeling.

A couple of weeks ago, remodeling

of the former police building was completed at a cost of about \$150,000. City manager Costick's office is now in the former police building. His office, as well as personnel and community relations, are on the second floor.

The first floor of the former police

building houses the special services department's senior adult division. Also on the first floor is a large meeting room able to seat 20-25 people around a large table with additional space for another 10-20 people. A conference room also is available on the upper level, Costick said.

Focus: HOPE is sole recipient

For the 13th consecutive year, Focus: HOPE is the sole recipient of the Mercy High School Thanksgiving Food Drive.

This effort culminated in a ceremony of Thanksgiving in the Mercy auditorium Nov. 24, where a variety of Focus: HOPE officials and area religious leaders participated. Students, faculty and staff contributed several meals to more than 65 families and senior citizens whose names were provided by Focus: HOPE. Each advisor, or homeroom group at the private Farmington Hills school, was given the opportunity to provide assistance to a specific senior citizen or family in the area.

Joining in the celebration Tuesday were Edna Jackson and Sally Bowers of Focus: HOPE, the Rev. Jim Wright of St. Alexander Catholic Church, the Rev. Lynette Stallworth of Faith Bethany United Methodist Church, and other area clergy. Music was provided by Michael Blatitzky and the Mercy Chamber Orchestra.

Donations of food, clothing, money and volunteer work are given by the Mercy community to a variety of charities throughout the school year, as part of the school's 42-year tradi-

tion and commitment to social justice. This year's donations were loaded

into a large truck following the ceremony by students and Focus: HOPE personnel.

Grove traffic light eyed

Farmington residents are eyeing recent activity at the Grand River and Grove intersection with interest.

It is the downtown site for a pedestrian-activated traffic signal, which residents who walk in the downtown area are eagerly awaiting.

City officials said the target date for installation is still the end of 1987; it appears this estimate may not be too far off.

City manager Robert Deadman said installation has begun for the state-owned light, and that as of Dec. 7, one pole on the south side of Grand River was already in. "They want to have it in by the end of the year," he added.


DEADMAN SAID residents of the Farmington Place senior complex have been advised as the city received updates on the project.

"Notices have been sent over to the senior center and posted," he said.

The Michigan Department of Transportation, which will own the light, is working with the Oakland County Road Commission and Detroit Edison to install the signal on the state-owned trunkline. The signal was approved by MDOT in November 1985. The city of Farmington is paying about \$4,000 of the \$18,000 installation bill.

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