

New Hills mayor stresses planning

By Joanne Mallazewski
staff writer

Planning for Farmington Hills' future is what newly sworn in Mayor Jody Soronen is turning her attention to in 1988.

"We as a council must first of all establish our goals and set forth a work plan for ourselves and the staff. It is important that we communicate with them and the citizens what we would like to accomplish this year," Soronen told a full house at the city council's first meeting of the new year Monday.

Soronon was sworn in as mayor for a second time in her council career by deputy city clerk Kathy (Frey) Dornan at the special meeting. In an annually repeated event, outgoing Mayor Ben Marks passed the traditional gavel to Soronen, the council's former mayor pro tem.

"I now formally pass the helm of this city, the direction, the wisdom to Mrs. Jody Soronen, your new mayor," Marks said.

Soronon and new mayor pro tem Terry Sever were unanimously elected to their new one-year posts in December.

SORONON is executive director of the Farmington-Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce. Her other community and governmental activities include membership on the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments and the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority.

"We shall continue to encourage and foster new ideas that will improve the quality of life in Farmington Hills," said Soronen, a nine-year

council veteran. "Some of these items may well come from the staff, the citizens or from the boards and commissions. I hope that we hear from them often."

The new mayor urged continuing efforts "to build strong, positive relationships with our friends in the city of Farmington, the board of education, community-based groups and service institutions and our neighbors in Novi, Southfield, Livonia and West Bloomfield."

IN HER remarks, Soronen, who served as mayor in 1980, offered an agenda for 1988:

- Completion of road project scheduled under the city's \$7 million bond issue. Special attention should be paid to safety improvements, paving of major gravel roads, new traffic signals and improving traffic capacity on the roads.

- Continuing the city's and the Economic Development Corporation's efforts to develop "an acceptable design and realistic implementation plan for 12 Mile."

- A continuing concerted effort with the Michigan Department of Transportation for improvements or solutions to traffic problems. Efforts should be made for new interchanges on I-696 at Haggerty and east of Inkster, sound barriers along I-696, the planned M-9 trunkline along the Haggerty corridor. Other areas that need attention are the M-102/Grand River interchange and Northwestern Highway.

- Continuing work with the six-community consortium to develop and plan solutions for the city's solid waste, in light of increasing disposal

costs and probable closing of many landfills.

- Expected completion of the second phase of improvements at the 212-acre Heritage Park and "expansion of recreation facilities where possible for organized youth sports teams."

- Select a site and begin construction of a fifth centrally located fire station near city hall on 11 Mile and Orchard Lake roads. "We need also to find a more efficient site to relocate station No. 1 (in the Farmington Freeway Industrial Park), which serves the southwest quadrant of town."

- Expected completion of the E-911 emergency telephone system.

- "We're looking for the development of new ideas, perhaps through the targeted use of (federal) Community Development Block Grant funds, to enhance the older neighborhoods."

- Continued support of projects that will lead to further beautification of the city.

TAKING A deeper glance into the city's future, Soronen announced that the city council will work with the planning commission in their goal of updating the city's master land use plan. The council also will work with other boards and commissions, such as the beautification and parks and recreation commission and EDC in developing a 10-year plan for the city's future.

"I know I can count on all of you who are charged with the care and feeding and the TLC (tender loving care) solutions to keep this community a fine," Soronen said.



staff photos by RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Deputy city clerk Kathy (Frey) Dornan (left) swears in new Mayor Jody Soronen Monday night.

Conway wins top honor

Continued from Page 1

the morning he found Conway hard at work in city hall at 5 a.m.

"Coming in at 5 a.m. . . that's the absolute truth," said Dan Potter, special services department director. "I've been here only 1 1/2 years, but in that short time period, I've grown to appreciate and marvel at her dedication to the senior citizens."

"She's just an amazing gal. She works very, very hard for the senior adults," Potter continued. "She also works very diligently with other city departments. She's a tremendously dedicated person. I'm very pleased to become acquainted with her in these 1 1/2 years."

Costick echoed similar sentiments. "She's dedicated to her profession of gerontology and her

work. She throws herself into the job, putting in many, many hours."

"LORETTA HAS always been an exemplary citizen. She's very, very concerned about the welfare of her fellow man. That carries on not only in her work with senior citizens but with everyone — her fellow employees, friends, family," Costick said.

The city manager credits Conway for the senior adult program's success. "She's made it what it is today. The fine reputation is due to her."

Conway essentially created the program, starting out as a part-time employee. Her first year, she worked under Farmington city manager Robert Deadman. The program then fell under the auspices of the city of Farmington Hills.

The Senior Adult Division, which includes the senior adult center in Mercy Center, has grown to two full-time employees, five part-time and about 300 volunteers.

Conway freely admits she has devoted her time, her emotions, basically her life, to the division and particularly the senior adults she has come to call friends. "I think being a single person it's what a wife would put into a marriage. When you are in the human services you have to be giving. I gave it to my children. My children grew up."

"I think I had more to give. But I've gotten a lot more back," continued Conway, mother of four grown children.

2 officers draw spotlight

By Joanne Mallazewski
staff writer

Babies provided a bit of apprehension as well as moments of satisfaction in 1987 for a Farmington Hills police officer and firefighter honored as Public Safety Officers of the Year.

Patrolman Brad Schwartz and firefighter Walter Kurzeja were honored Monday before a full house of fellow employees and residents for their efforts in saving the lives of two babies in separate incidents.

On Sept. 22, Schwartz responded to a call at a Farmington Hills residence where a baby had stopped breathing. "Officer Schwartz immediately initiated First Aid measures on the child while instructing the mother on techniques to assist in aiding the child," Police Chief William Dwyer said.

Thanks to Schwartz, "the child's airway was cleared and his breathing restored," Dwyer said. "Officer Schwartz's quick response to this medical emergency without question saved the infant's life and is indicative of his highly professional work."

The 17-year police department veteran's resume includes a two-year stint with the undercover Oakland County Narcotics Enforcement Team. He is a member of the police department's honor guard and serves as a field training officer.

The police officer of the year is chosen by the Farmington Hills Police Department Citation and Award Board. The honor is given on the basis of "valor in the performance of duty where the officer is faced with the immediate threat of death or serious injury to himself or others or renders outstanding, exceptional and professional service to the department."

KURZEJA was lauded for his part in delivering a premature baby last March after discovering that the umbilical cord was wrapped around the baby's neck. Kurzeja's fellow firefighters nominated him for his role in saving the baby's life. He was officially honored in September at the annual Farmington Hills Fire Department banquet and awards night.

"It was a very complicated delivery even in ideal conditions," Fire Chief Richard Marinucci said.

Kurzeja is a full-time firefighter,



Brad Schwartz
Police Officer of the Year



Wally Kurzeja
Firefighter of the Year

a volunteer sergeant, a member of the department's special response team and is heavily involved in training, including attendance this year at the National Fire Academy. He also is a member of the Western Wayne County Hazardous Team.

The firefighter of the year award is bestowed on the basis of "outstanding contributions above and beyond the call of duty. Firefighters are honored for their actions performed on behalf of the residents of Farmington Hills."

IN ADDITION to recognizing Loretta Conway, supervisor of the special service department's senior adult division, as employee of the year, city employees also chose five colleagues as outstanding employees.

Honored were Kay Gates, police department; Bob Malloy, public works; Sue Rose, city clerk's office; Lorraine Schmidt, engineering; and Shirley Shottroff, public services.

The outstanding employee awards are designed to honor "a fantastic group of employees who are deserving of some merit and recognition from the community and their fellow employees," city manager William Costick said, as he presented each with awards.

Gates, a 19-year city veteran, was lauded for her ability to handle heavy workloads and problems with "poise, confidence and control. Kay has a genuine concern for residents

and their problems," Costick said, reading the nominations.

Malloy, who has worked for the public works division for 12 years, was honored for his activities within the department, including serving as flood monitor when the Red Roof Inn was flooded and coordinating the annual truck rodeo.

Malloy also was lauded for taking the initiative in suggesting "more efficient ways" to accomplish tasks in the public works division. "He's respected and on friendly terms with all people in the department," according to nominations.

SHE NEVER complains. That's what one nomination said about Rose, an eight-year city veteran. Rose also was called "an excellent mistake catcher" who "handles the public with respect and finds solutions to their problems."

Lorraine Schmidt was touted for her "thorough understanding of all (engineering) division activities." In nominating her, fellow employees called attention to the goodwill she promotes among colleagues.

"She treats the public with genuine concern and respect," according to the nominations.

Shottroff was described as an employee who gets the job done and one who "people in city hall gravitate towards." She also "goes out of her way to help fellow employees and the public," colleagues said.

Dudley, Wolf lauded

By Joanne Mallazewski
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There seems little doubt outgoing Mayor Ben Marks will forever be known as the mayor who had the most fun.

"Anyway ladies and gentlemen, I would like to have you know that this has been probably been the most extraordinary and fulfilling year of my life. I've made an awful lot of new friends. I've been to every corner of this city and have loved every moment of it," Marks said before passing the gavel to new Mayor Jody Soronen.

In her first official act, Soronen presented Marks with a plaque honoring his work as mayor. Soronen was joined by council members Jan Dolan and Terry Sever in recognizing Marks year as council leader.

"Ben has had a ball," Dolan said. "I think Ben in all honesty has had as

much fun as anyone can."

FOLLOWING A standing ovation by the full house of city employees, residents and boards and commission members, Marks completed his year as mayor by giving awards to two former council colleagues, Joan Dudley and Don Wolf.

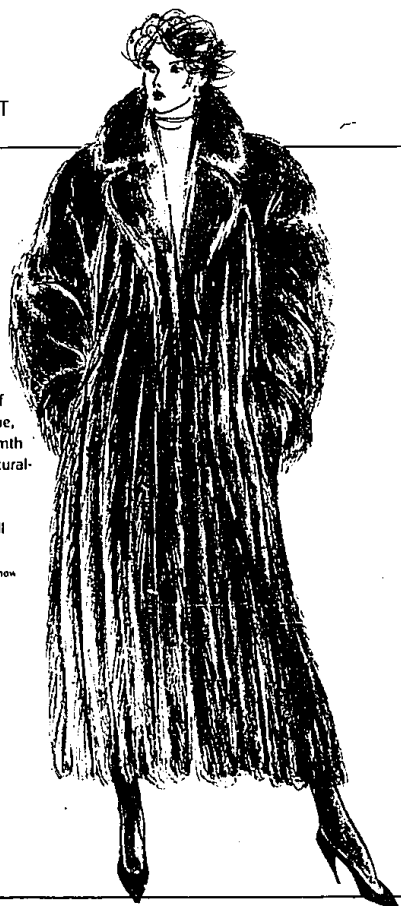
"She has been a woman who has been firm in her own convictions and willing to fight and go to the mat with it. The city of Farmington Hills owes her a vote of thanks for her dedication, for her work with caring she has given in the years she has served on the city council," Marks said, presenting Dudley with a plaque for her years of service.

In presenting a similar award to Wolf, Marks said, "In the three years I served next to Don Wolf, we learned to appreciate one another, enjoy one another, disagree with one another and confide in one another."

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Outgoing Mayor Ben Marks helps pass out employee recognition awards in the Farmington Hills City Hall Council Chambers Monday night.