

Chatham streets get more city work

By Casey Hone
staff writer

More concrete streets will be replaced this summer in the Chatham Hills subdivision. Money from a previous assessment and road bond proceeds will cover the \$83,740 cost.

Some 1,800 square yards of street will be replaced in addition to last summer's street project.

The change was approved Monday by the Farmington City Council. It will cost residents no more than their current special assessments, according to city officials.

MOST CHATHAM Hills street repairs were done last year, after city engineers determined much of the neighborhood street foundation had deteriorated. The city paid 40 percent and residents the balance of the \$1.2 million project done last summer.

Engineers found the road base worse than they expected, city officials said, and recommended the additional work after an inspection last fall.

The previous contractor, John Carlo Inc., will do the work although his cost bid for the second portion of the project was "substantially higher than his original bid," city manager Robert Deadman said.

"The engineer is concerned about changing contractors on this project," Deadman said, because "if any problems should occur... the contractors would probably try to place the responsibility... on each other."

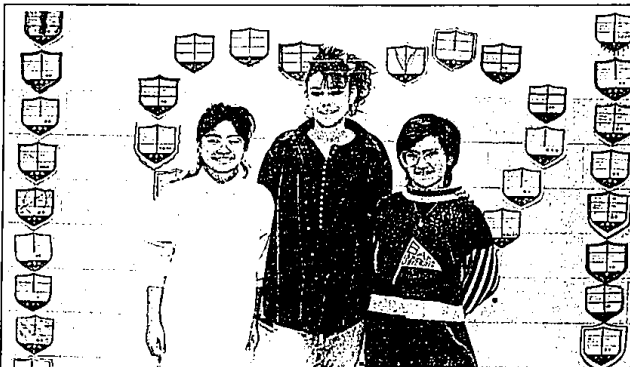
Deadman said that because the major portion of the project is complete, John Carlo will be purchasing material from suppliers and will subcontract much of the work, which will cost more money.

In addition to street replacement, the city will rout, clean and seal all street joints to give more protection from surface water.

THE CHATHAM Hills project generated controversy from many residents of the hilly neighborhood on Grand River, before and during construction season last year.

Residents complained about their special assessments, and about the dust and dirt they lived with during the summer months.

The city was spending half of its road maintenance money in Chatham Hills before the work was done, trying to keep the streets drivable, Deadman said.



Warner sixth grader Ann Ma (left), eighth-grader Missy Lieberman and sixth-grader Erin Krell each received a star for each 100

pages read. They earned 54, 46 and 52 stars, respectively. All are from Farmington Hills.

Readathon under way at Warner

Warner Middle School is completing a readathon by celebrating March as Reading Month.

Reading specialist Hope Aiken and English teacher Judy Monroe set the readathon in motion.

A large cardboard Viking, the school symbol, was placed by the front office. From the Viking, paper shields, each representing a book, encircled the interior of the building.

Shields contained the title, author, number of pages and rank of the book. The rank was from 1 to 5 with five meaning "don't miss it."

"Over 700 shields have decorated the walls. Over 200,000 pages have been read by our 485 students," Aiken said.

County windfall aids Hills thoroughfares

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

A more than \$300,000 windfall from Oakland County will be used to improve two major thoroughfares in Farmington Hills.

The source of the \$368,000 is part of the county's general fund surplus, which Oakland County Board of Commissioners earmarked for road improvements, overriding the veto of county executive Daniel Murphy.

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ington-Farmington Hills resurfacing and widening of the Nine Mile intersection at Farmington Road. The Hills' share of the project is about \$180,000. The remaining \$188,000 in the city's share of the county appropriation will be put toward the Nine Mile project, city manager William Costick said.

FARMINGTON OFFICIALS In November said more than likely they also would use all or part of their \$53,000 allocation for the Nine Mile intersection project.

Originally, Farmington Hills officials considered using the county money to improve the 12 Mile-Halsted intersection. They also considered using the money to supplement the city's more than \$14 million, three-year road-improvement program

that's financed in part with voter-approved \$7 million general obligation bonds.

But those plans were set aside when the county established guidelines for the surplus money. The city cannot use its windfall for any improvements that are already budgeted or that are part of an annual tripartite road program financed by the city, county board of commissioners and road commission, Costick said.

Projects that may be financed with the county money include road widenings, paving, repaving, reconstruction, restoration, safety and drainage improvements, bridge and culvert replacements, traffic controls and guard rails.

The county's distribution of the money is pro-rated based on each municipality's state equalized valuation.

Municipalities may choose to use the money on their own street system rather than on county roads.

The county board's decision to allocate money for road improvements drew controversy.

COUNTY EXECUTIVE Murphy vetoed the measure on the ground it violated state law prohibiting use of property tax revenue for roads. The board reasoned that the measure was legal, however, because property taxes weren't earmarked for roads and are mixed with other revenues in the general fund.

In a form resolution provided by county commissioners and adopted by the Farmington Hills City Council, the allocation is referred to as "certain non-property tax funding."

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