

10 gardens open
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Camp offers students
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SHE didn't mince any words. In urging fellow council members to be wary of any tax burden that might overwhelm the city's elderly, councilwoman Jean Fox said June 6: "We should not be in the business of driving senior citizens out of the homes they've lived in all of these years just because their neighbors are making an ungodly profit on their homes."

"There has got to be some justice in society so that people who've finally gotten to retirement can enjoy this retirement in the environment they worked to get."

Fox's comments came in the wake of a now-approved .2-mill tax rate increase, which city manager William Costick said was needed to maintain the same level and quality of municipal services in 1988-89.

LOOKING back into history — Did you know electricity came to Farmington in 1911 and telephone service in 1914?

Quote of the week

"I don't buy the super-sensitive nature of Drake Road. It's curvey, that's all. I do have a problem spending an extra \$80,000."

— Farmington Hills councilman Ben Marks, in voting to award a Drake Road paving contract to the low bidder (see story this page).

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Hills OKs budget, millage hike

By Casey Hans and
Joanne Maliszewski
staff writers

Farmington Hills voters will pay less than a quarter-mill tax rate increase this year to support a \$24 million budget for 1988-89.

The city council voted 6-1 to approve the millage rate increase and new budget. But councilwoman Jean Fox said Monday she was opposed to any increase. She advocated retaining the same tax rate of 8.2 mills because residents already will pay more through rising property values.

"When assessments go up so dramatically," she said, "it behooves responsible city officials to carefully consider the tax rate levied. Even keeping the rate stable means an extra \$2.3 million in revenue for city coffers."

The tax rate increase is the result of what city manager William Costick calls a "budget dilemma." The city faces revenue losses and significant cost increases entering the new fiscal year, which begins July 1.

The \$24 million budget is a 6.5 percent increase over the previous

"When assessments go up so dramatically, it behooves responsible city officials to carefully consider the tax rate levied. Even keeping the rate stable means an extra \$2.3 million in revenue for city coffers."

— Jean Fox
councilwoman



year's \$21.9 million budget. It will be supported by 9.4 mills. That's a .1418-mill increase over this past year's 9.258 levy.

The average taxpayer who owns a \$125,000 house, assessed at \$62,500, who paid \$578 in city taxes in 1987-88, will pay \$587 this year. This

doesn't include taxes levied by Farmington Public Schools, Oakland Intermediate School District, Oakland County and Oakland Community College.

THE PROBLEM facing the city this year is:

- loss of more than \$1 million in revenue because of the lack of a \$566,000 surplus to carry over into the new year,

- decreasing building permit fees of \$325,000, and
- elimination of federal shared revenues totaling \$112,000.

After reading a prepared statement Monday night, Fox was challenged by fellow council members to detail where she would cut the budget.

She said she could not, adding that "mine is a philosophical objection. This is the kind of thing the Headlee (Tax Limitation) Amendment was supposed to stop. In any budget of \$24 million . . . there are places to cut."

On the other side of the ledger, the city faces significant increases for refuse disposal, which will cost the city about \$1.5 million this year.

There are also additional costs in police services, property assessment administration and employee health benefits.

The city's debt retirement millage also shows an increase in the coming year because of the city's \$7 million general obligation bonds for the three-year road improvement program.

The new budget reflects increases for maintenance and operating costs for the city's new parks system, including the 210-acre, nature-oriented Heritage Park and the 15-acre, youth-athletic Pioneer Park.

AN AVERAGE 4-percent salary increase for employees, including most department heads, is included in the new budget.

Additional personnel are budgeted, including:

- two police officers, one specifically for traffic enforcement, and

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Farmington Community Library director Beverly Papai (left) and library assistant Maureen Baugh at the circulation desk of the Hills branch.

Incumbents win thin school vote

Walled Lake, Cville
election results, 10A
OCC election results, 7A

By Casey Hans
staff writer

College professor James Abernethy and longtime school trustee Helen Prutow will each serve another four-year term on the Farmington school board.

Each dated challenger Bruce Jacob in Monday's annual school election by nearly a 2-1 margin, according to an unofficial vote count from the Farmington district.

The election drew a meager turnout of only 565 people, or 1.1 percent of the district's 50,021 registered voters.

Incumbent Abernethy garnered

the most votes with 378, followed closely by incumbent Prutow with 357. Newcomer Jacob trailed with 183, or 20 percent of the vote.

A surprise write-in candidate, Roger M. Lyon, received four votes.

ENTERING HIS second term on the board, Abernethy is looking forward to a number of changes in the district, including the building of a new elementary school and necessary upgrades in other buildings.

He credits Monday's incumbent wins, and the low voter turnout, to an overall satisfaction with the way the district is operating.

"I think the extremely low turnout represents a feeling on the part of the community that things are in order," he said. "There was no need to come out and vote."

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Library bill before Senate would allow taxing power

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Some believe the time has come for the growing Farmington Community Library to stand on its own and directly ask taxpayers for financial support.

Senate bill 896 might allow just that, and when it passes muster in the state Legislature sometime this fall. Sponsored by Sen. Harmon Croppie, R-Decatur, the bill would allow established district libraries, such as the Farmington Community Library, independence as a tax-levying authority.

"It would allow authority status, as recognized by the state Constitution, without asking (the electorate) for it," library director Beverly Papai said.

The bill, however, would require a public vote on requests for a maximum 2 mills operating levy and in the case of the two-branch Farmington system, a request for a bond issue to expand the 12 Mile Hills branch.

The bill also would change the number of members on the library board of trustees and perhaps how they are selected.

"I think the time has come to sub-

mit it to voter participation in light of their (library officials) plan in the 1990s to expand the library (the 12 Mile branch)," Farmington Hills city manager William Costick said.

THE PROPOSED more than \$2.5 million expansion of the 12 Mile branch could be the catalyst for reviving the library's historic quest for independence. The cities of Farmington and Farmington Hills are the library's primary financing source.

SB 896 would clarify the state's current District Library Act of 1955.

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Drake Road paving given to low bidder

By Casey Hans
staff writer

Attention was drawn — again — to a historic, winding portion of Drake Road this week, as Farmington Hills city officials debated just which contractor should work on the scenic stretch.

In a split vote Monday, Farmington Hills City Council members awarded the \$1.17 million bid for work on Drake, between 11 Mile and 1-696, to the low bidder, P & R Contracting of Rochester. An administrative recommendation had requested they do otherwise.

The decision may have been prompted by testimony from the owner of the firm, Ricky Giannetti, and his Farmington Hills attorney, Bruce Lazar, who spoke before council Monday.

"These people have substantial experience," Lazar said. "They feel personally insulted. The bid was published — the industry is being told they're unqualified. That's a bitter pill to swallow."

"They've done nothing to disqualify themselves, and they deserve this contract as the low bidder."

The "environmentally sensitive" nature of the project prompted city engineers and administrators to recommend a company that had experience as a primary contractor on similar jobs, although city charter requires contracts be given to the lowest bidder.

"WE FIND ourselves in a position we don't like," said Hills city manager William Costick. "This is the

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House candidate campaigns full time

election '88, 8B

This is the second in a series profiling each of the six candidates running for the 69th District state House seat. Their positions on specific campaign issues will be detailed in upcoming coverage.

By Casey Hans
staff writer

Michael Bouchard is taking his campaign for the state House so seriously he resigned his job as a Bloomfield Township police officer and is spending his days pounding



the campaign trail.

The 32-year-old Republican is taking a hard-working, but low-key approach to his bid for the 69th District seat, which will be vacated this year by Wilbur "Sandy" Brotherton, R-Farmington, who is retiring. Bouchard, who is Beverly Hills Village Council president, compares himself

to Brotherton with his "down-home, laid-back, but effective" approach. "I don't want to be intrusive, but I want to bring myself to as many doorsteps as I can," he said. "My priority is to get my credentials out . . . and bring my message to the homes and the people."

"The truth of the matter is, I really want to do this with all my heart. I don't want to look back in five years and say I didn't give it my all. I'd like to be part of the team that changes things for the better."

Bouchard's priorities include revamping of a "revolving door" criminal justice system, enhancing the state's business atmosphere and an across-the-board look at education.

WHEN IT comes to fund-raising, Bouchard's view differs from that of many candidates. "The more time I put into raising funds, the less time I'm meeting people," he said.

Bouchard says he "finds it hard to ask people for money" and will work with personal funds, plus what fund-raisers his supporters schedule.

Since Bouchard became serious about his candidacy five months ago, he has garnered endorsements and support from many officials, including state Sen. Doug Crone, former state Rep. Ruth McNamara, Oakland County Prosecutor L. Brooks Patterson, Oakland County commissioner

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Michael Bouchard
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