

Tans are passe
as the '80s look, 1D



Wolverines
win title, 1C

Neighborliness, food
make block party, 1B

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On board.
Farmington Hills Mayor Jody Soronen has reappointed Keith Deacon to a six-year term on the Economic Development Corporation and appointed city clerk Kathy Dornan to a two-year term on the Building Authority.

MOVING up.
Jon Maddern was promoted to district chief at Farmington Hills Fire Department Station 1 on Research Park Drive Aug. 1.

He is responsible for supervising 20 part-time firefighters. Maddern joined the fire department in 1979. Since moving to Station 1 in 1980, he has risen through the ranks. His last rank before his latest promotion was captain. Maddern is a state-licensed emergency medical technician.

Memory lane

25 years ago this week:
Farmington City Council approved removal of the troublesome steps on the north side of Grand River west of Farmington Road and at the southwest corner of Grand River and Farmington Road. Included in this project will be new sloping walks and asphalt surfacing of the roadway with new grades to accomplish step elimination. The Farmington area recorded its seventh traffic fatality of the year this week, an all-time high with still more than four months and the Labor Day and Christmas holidays ahead. Conroy's Super Market in downtown Farmington is advertising whole rock fryers at 25 cents a pound.
— Farmington Enterprise, 1963

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Marks pays long overdue city fee

By Casey Hans
staff writer

Farmington Hills councilman Ben Marks made good on a 1½-year-old \$17,000 debt to the city Friday, following allegations earlier in the week he received special treatment.

Marks, who is a local developer, said he obtained long-awaited mortgage financing Thursday for his office building on the northwest corner of 11 Mile and Orchard Lake Road. He paid the past-due sewer tap-in fee, and full accrued interest and late charges, Friday morning.

"He did bring a check in within the last hour," city finance director



Ben Marks pays debt

Charles Rosch confirmed shortly before noon Friday. "It's a cashier's check. Good as gold — this one won't bounce."

The check was for \$22,526, which included the principal plus penalty and interest charges that began accumulating when the accounts receivable debt was 30 days old.

City manager William Costick confirmed last week that Marks wrote a bad check to the city for \$17,000 1½ years ago, and until last week had not made good on that debt.

Marks told the Observer the situation occurred when he wrote a check in anticipation of mortgage financing that became unexpectedly delayed because of a mixup about minimum occupancy requirements for his building.

COUNCILMAN ALDO Vagnozzi had requested a full report last week about the Marks incident, saying the matter is, indeed, a

matter of public concern. "The matter was brought up at a public meeting. What happened cannot be undone. I'm looking for the ability to tell the public . . . this matter has been resolved," he said Thursday.

Upon hearing of the payment Friday, Vagnozzi said: "I'm glad and I think it ought to be announced Monday night (Aug. 15) at the meeting. That should end the situation."

Mayor Jody Soronen called Marks' situation with the city "personal business" when the issue was raised last week. Vagnozzi said he disagreed.

"When the mayor said she was speaking for the council, . . . I disagreed," he said. "I thought it was public. I think it was implied that his situation turned out to be handled differently than others might have been handled."

KAREN PLACE resident Janet Hulbert,

representing a group of angry residents, read a prepared statement to the city council last Monday, voicing concerns about city operations in general and land use in particular.

It included a paragraph about Marks: "It has just come to our attention that Ben Marks, while serving as mayor, issued a check to the city in excess of \$17,000. The check bounced. This was for his office building which . . . sits in the very shadow of city hall. That was a year and a half ago, and the amount is still outstanding."

Council members said they were told last Monday, before the council meeting, that residents were going to raise the issue. Costick said he had been aware of the matter "since the check bounced" but had been promised repayment throughout the 1½ years.

But Costick also said that Marks was more carefully scrutinized than other builders as he constructed his building across from city hall.

Council recall on 'back burner'

By Casey Hans
staff writer

Farmington Hills residents upset with city hall over land-use planning say reference to a possible council recall effort last week was no "idle threat."

But they appear to be moving ahead cautiously. No final decision has been made about who they may target, the possible reasons for recall, or if they will attempt it at all.

One resident said the issue had been placed on a "back burner" but was still being considered.

"There's a lawyer right now doing the wording," said another resident, Rosa Flum, who lives on Stockton. "If we have to have the arrogance . . . I guess we may have to go ahead with it."

A group of 15-20 residents in southeast Farmington Hills are waiting to see how the city handles land-use planning involving several parcels, including the site of the Flamingo Trailer Court on the east side of Middlebelt, north of Nine Mile. The park is a non-conforming use in a general business district/one-family residential zone.

Tonight, the city council, upon the planning commission's recommendation, will consider rezoning it as a mobile home district.

The residents said the handling of that rezoning proposal would guide them in any possible recall effort.

"I can't tell you anything until after Monday's meeting," said Karen

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Southfield zoning bid is opposed

By Casey Hans
staff writer

Farmington Hills city officials want a property parcel owned by Southfield Public Schools, and adjacent to their city, to remain zoned for single family homes.

A letter from the Hills city council to the Southfield City Council will state just that.

"We want to urge them to keep the character" of the area, said Hills councilwoman Jean Fox. "We should encourage them to hold firm, to stand fast," added councilwoman Jan Dolan.

The Hills council took action Aug. 8, in time for an Aug. 22 public hearing on the issue scheduled by the Southfield City Council.

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RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Thanks to the McCluskeys, the Harger House has found a new home on the north side of 12 Mile, west of Drake, next to another historic place, the Pettibone House.

Historic move House gets new lease on life

IT WAS TORN down, stone by stone, then brought back to life at a new site on 12 Mile.

The historic John Dallas Harger House, an 1897 Greek Revival-style farm house and former dairy, was saved from the wrecking ball in 1986, when new owners Donald and Lynn McCluskey offered to relocate the house for use as an office. It sits next to the Pettibone House on 12 Mile, west of Drake.

The McCluskeys' business, Insurance Dimension, moved into the house last December; during the past several months, outdoor lighting, landscaping, and interior decorating were completed.

According to Insurance Dimension employee Teresa Newman, paintings of other historic buildings in Farmington Hills have been completed and are hanging on office walls.

Each of the 1,000 cut-stones in

the house was coded before it was taken apart from its original site on Halsted Road south of 11 Mile. The codes helped to reassemble the house in its original form, over a new, 850-foot basement.

THE MCCLUSKEYS worked with local historians and others in making the move. They also received photographs from John Dallas Harger's granddaughter to aid in their renovation.

During the move, the McCluskeys found several surprises. They found 1,000-pound beams that sat atop the stone walls and were used to support the roof.

They also discovered straw used as insulation materials around the windows.

The Harger House now sits with a 150-year-old white oak tree, which shades the house from the rear, and its site number 13 in the Farmington Hills Historic District.

Edison studying recent outages

By Louise Okrutsky
staff writer

Farmington and Farmington Hills are periodically dancing in the dark this summer. And Detroit Edison professes to be equally in the dark when it comes to offering a definitive reason for the power outages.

In light of this summer's spate of power problems, the utility is compiling a history of the area's outages, which it plans to release within the next month to both city governments. The survey will be used to find a solution to the power problems.

One of the latest on the list power list is the area bordered by Eight

Mile, Drake, Grand River and Orchard Lake Road. According to Detroit Edison, 3,800 customers in the area were without electrical power between 8:50 and 8 p.m. Thursday.

Traffic lights in the area of Farmington and Freedom roads failed to function without power. Farmington Crossroads shopping center, at Nine Mile and Farmington Road, was forced to shut its doors. Among the stores in the center are Farmer Jack, A&W and Bonner's Hallmark.

"The cables that feed the area went out on us. We don't know why. With the hot weather, there's been a lot of stress on the system. A lot of times, there is not enough when the power is out," said National Spokes-

man Dan Vecchioni. "The crews don't report right back with the reason. They're there to restore power."

SOME CUSTOMERS believe they're kept in the dark when they ask the utility for an explanation. "They will give you no information whatever," said Frank Tatta, owner of the A&W restaurant in Farmington Crossroads. It was the first time this summer the store has been without power.

But Tatta owns two A&W's in the Farmington area. He says his other store, at Grand River and Nine Mile, has been subject to power outages

"With the hot weather, there's been a lot of stress on the system. A lot of times, there is no answer when the power is out."

— Dan Vecchioni, Edison spokesman

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