

Residents offer schools support for bond election

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still allow them to aim for a fall 1990 opening date for the new elementary, trustee James Abernethy said he still has hopes they can.

"I don't want to give up on (having) a school in 1990," said Abernethy, head of the board's building and site committee. "I want to get moving on this bond issue."

Deputy superintendent Michael Flanagan said January would be the earliest another election could be held, because of regulations involving the November election. He also said if wording on the ballot were to be similar, the district might have to wait six months to go before voters again. This is prompting officials to consider having multiple ballot questions on a second proposal.

"They are also looking carefully at safety issues in the district."

Tuesday, parents concerned about lighting ballasts in older school buildings spoke out about incidents of liquid with PCBs dripping on students and asked the board to take immediate action. The district, like

others in the state, is also facing an Oct. 12 deadline for filing a management plan to get rid of asbestos in the schools.

Trustee Janice Rolnick assured residents the issues would be addressed immediately. "I don't think there's any question the safety issues will be taken care of," she said.

Patrick Anderson, a Farmington Hills resident and economist for the Alexander Hamilton Life Insurance Co., also spoke before the board as he promised, rehabbing many of his previous complaints, but many of the issues were already being discussed and addressed.

Rolnick blamed Anderson and his boss, Richard Headlee, for prompting the millage defeat with their last-minute concerns about the project.

"I think you've helped to bury the issues and bury what this district needs," she said. "In my 10 years on the board, I have never seen Mr. Headlee at a board meeting, nor you. Yet you think you know everything there is to know about this district."

Representatives of the Concerned



Patrick Anderson

Parents Coalition, an east-side group that formed during redistricting debates earlier this year, gave a written statement to the board, accusing Headlee and his people of "cashing in politically" and "grabbing last-minute headlines at the expense of our children."

Members Jerry Plasecki and Joanne Woolf also requested a new bond issue and called on board members not to reconsider any massive redistricting efforts.

"To even consider bringing back the redistricting ghost of mistakes past would represent a major step backward," their statement said. "In discussing a new school, we're not talking about a frill or luxury. It is vital to serve the children living on the west side of our district."

Local officials say proposed tax would bring useful funds

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Even if this is a built-up community, other people are building roads (in nearby communities) and that impacts our roads. We have a lot of old roads. Some of them in the subdivisions are pre-World War II."

AS REQUESTED by the Oakland County Road Commission, Farmington and Farmington Hills officials developed a list of projects that would be completed if the vehicle fee passed. The list is subject to revision each year of financing.

"They (road commission) are trying to be sure every community knows what it's going to get," Costick said. "We're willing to put the money into county roads. Basically, we feel it's a reasonable list. We had to coordinate it with money left in the third year of a (\$7 million) bond issue or other sources programmed."

Passage of the vehicle fee does not mean each of the cities won't continue financing road improvements with its major and local road fund. Farmington Hills, for example, con-

tinues to improve certain roads financed with \$7 million in general obligation bonds, approved by voters in 1986. Both cities also would continue to receive money for roads through state gas and weight taxes.

If voters agree with the fee, all county residents would pay \$25 for each vehicle they own. This does not include trailers, boats, snowmobiles, mopeds, historic vehicles or agricultural equipment.

"I feel most people would be willing to spend \$25," Costick said, though recognizing it might be a problem for residents with 3-4 cars. "That will be an issue with many people."

The Secretary of State would collect the fees when residents' vehicles are registered or renewed each year. The money, minus a state collection fee, would be turned over to the Oakland County Treasurer for distribution to local communities.

EVEN THOUGH the money would be doled out by the county, its use is solely a decision by local city, township and village officials.

"The only requirement is that these funds be used for road improvements and operations or for public transportation," according to the Oakland County Road Commission. "The decision regarding which roads or streets get improved, which road operations are increased, or whether a portion of the funds are used for senior citizen and handicapped transportation services will be made by your local representatives."

If passed, the fee would generate approximately \$200 million over the next 10 years. County officials admit the fee is not a sole answer to the overall estimated \$750 million in county road needs.

The vehicle fee was the only option state legislators allowed. Other options suggested were a county gas tax, sales tax on auto parts and autos, and developer impact fees.

"The only one that passed of all the local options was the \$25 fee. No one feels individual cities can impose these (other options) and make any sense of them," Costick said.

Community voices concern about PCBs in light ballasts

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The only incidents which affected students or employees occurred at Longacre, school officials said, where about 70 percent of the ballasts have already been replaced.

"This is a very recent thing," said trustee Janice Rolnick. "The minute we heard about it, we began talking about it. The bond issue addressed it."

"I think it's something we must do, but you have to have the funds to do it with."

Trustees said this week they planned to go back to residents to ask for bond money, after a similar issue was defeated last week.

Superintendent Graham Lewis said there are currently no federal mandates to remove such materials from schools, as there is for controlling asbestos. "But toxins are toxins, and we're going to get it out of this district," he added. "We are the only district in this country which is independently making this effort."

Tom Harkin, a representative who is handling asbestos abatement in the district, said "most other districts are more interested in doing minimal amounts (of asbestos work). No one is doing anything at all about PCBs."

Farmington Public Schools has about 1.7 million square feet of light-

ed ceilings, most of which have the old lighting fixtures. Officials estimate it would take about \$2 million just to change the ballasts and about \$5.5 million to change the ballasts and lighting systems which are outdated.

Parents reported four incidents of lighting ballast leaks occurring at Longacre during the past year. School and community relations director Pam O'Malley said work was being done nightly to help the situation at Longacre.

"We don't want our kids 15 years from now, looking back and paying the price," Harrison said.

Each of the 63 cities, townships and villages was asked to provide Oakland County with a list of projects to be financed if voters approve the proposed \$25 vehicle registration fee.

Following are the projects and estimated costs proposed by Farmington and Farmington Hills officials:

● **FARMINGTON**
Farmington Road - widen it to five lanes from Eight Mile north to Nine Mile; \$1 million.

Freedom Road - repair and overlay from Nine Mile west to Halsted Road; \$200,000.

Drake Road - repair and overlay from Grand River to the city's southern limits; \$150,000.

About \$400,000 would be devoted to local road repairs and overlays and another \$119,000 for aesthetic improvements to the city's road system.

● **FARMINGTON HILLS**

Twelve Mile - build a boulevard from Farmington Road to Haggerty; \$11.2 million. The city also has applied for state financing for this project. If the city receives state financing, there will still be local costs that could be financed with vehicle fee revenues.

Twelve Mile - widen intersection at Haggerty; \$300,000.
Halsted Road - widen intersection at Grand River and M-102; \$600,000.

Thirteen Mile - reconstruct the roadway from Orchard Lake Road to Northwestern Highway; \$500,000.
Farmington Road - reconstruct

the roadway from Twelve Mile to 10 Mile; \$600,000.

Freedom Road - reconstruct the roadway from Gill Road west to the city limits; \$450,000.

Northwestern Highway - widen and reconstruct from city limit to city limit; the city's share would be \$500,000.

Fourteen Mile - reconstruct the roadway from Farmington Road to Haggerty; \$1 million.
Eight Mile - widen and reconstruct from Farmington Road to Haggerty; the city's share would be \$750,000.

Haggerty Road - widen and reconstruct from approximately 9th Mile Road to Grand River; \$400,000.

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