

Bond backers push for votes

Citizens working to support a \$7.3 million school bond issue election Tuesday, Jan. 31, say they are receiving support from those they approach.

The money would be used to build a new elementary school on the district's west side.

"The more people we talk to, the more we are impressed with the intelligence and concern of the voters of Farmington," said Tina Jensen, chairman of Friends of Farmington Schools, a political action committee organized in support of the bond issue.

The group has been actively polling, fund raising and campaigning to pass the issue.

"The feedback we're getting from the people has been incredibly positive," Jensen said. "Once informed of the need . . . the vast majority support the proposal."

"They know the quality of our school system has a direct effect on

their property values," she added. "They also do not want elementary school children spending hours on school buses each day in traffic, or having to eat their lunches in hallways."

JENSEN SAID the district's debt bond rate will stay the same, because other school debts being retired this year.

Friends of Farmington Schools is planning a series of town meetings to inform the public and answer questions about the bond issue. The meetings are scheduled for:

• Jan. 23 at 7 p.m., North Farmington High School.

• Jan. 24 at 7 p.m., Harrison High School.

• Jan. 25 at 7:30 p.m., Farmington High School.

Currently, 27 percent of all Farmington elementary school children live west of Drake Road, where there are no elementary schools, Jensen added.

Views split on Spicer project

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"We didn't know that was an available source of funds. The first thing we've got to do is understand the grant," parks and recreation chairman Dennis Fitzgerald said.

Contrary to speculation, Dan Potter, Farmington Hills Department of Special Services director, said Wednesday he doesn't believe the grant prohibits starting the project before applying and receiving notification of the grant's award. "I think we just can't be reimbursed for anything we've started."

But he told council members and commissioners that a grant for park development includes money for the Spicer house. The equity grant, he said, won't allow another grant to finish a project.

While the parks and recreation commission studies the grant's requirements within the next month, city staff will continue to prepare plans and specifications for bids, Potter said. Construction isn't expected to begin within the month.

'My . . . feeling is that the council voted and approved to proceed. Let's move ahead.'

— Paul Blizman
historic panel chairman

"This would stabilize as well as restore it," Potter said.

Work will be done on the house's asbestos problem, on the exterior, on the electrical and mechanical systems. Some renovation will be done on the interior to make room for a large meeting area.

FITZGERALD TOLD the council his concern stems from spending park millage money on the Spicer house when there might be a good chance the city could get grant money. He said a delay shouldn't be risky because "I don't think we're at any

point where the house will fall apart. The commission has always been supportive of the house. We are frustrated by the cost, the asbestos," Fitzgerald said.

But Fox cautioned that rarely does a municipality get the full amount for which it applies. The grant is the same used to renovate the Warner Museum in downtown Farmington. The amount received for the project was less than requested, Fox said.

The Farmington Hills Historic District Commission Wednesday passed a motion urging city officials

to proceed with planned restoration with the council-approved budget. The motion also urges city officials to apply for grants "for whatever purposes are appropriate for those grants," chairman Paul Blizman said.

"My own feeling is that the council voted and approved to proceed. Let's move ahead," Blizman said. "If we get a grant for the house, then we can reallocate the money. But I don't want to delay it. Then, we'll continually find other places to spend money."

Sever, however, is concerned about spending money on the Spicer house when there's a growing need for more land for parks and youth sports facilities. He prefers securing the grant for the Spicer house and using the money allocated for it for land acquisition or as leverage to secure other state grants to purchase property.

There's a limited amount of land available. We'll fix up the house and then there won't be any land left," Sever said.

Shouldn't be a competitor — Fox

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Farmington Hills city councilwoman Jean Fox doesn't want the Spicer estate house in Heritage Park in competition with the neighboring community center.

But if city officials apply for the Michigan Outstate Equity Grant to help finance restoration at the 63-year-old, historically designated house, they are required to use the money for regional services in one or more categories, such as a cultural center.

"I feel the community center is our cultural center. I don't know

whether we want to promote a regional cultural center right next door," Fox said. "I feel we need to be good neighbors on this. We do not want duplication of services."

But not all of Fox's colleagues are as concerned.

Councilman Aldo Vagozzi said he believes the community center and the planned visitors center in Heritage Park can complement each other. "I don't see us putting on classes there. We don't have the room. I don't see us getting into activities as the community center does."

VAGOZZI CALLED the grant re-

quirement about regional use "something they require to justify a state grant."

Councilman Philip Arnold reminded the city council and parks and recreation commissioners Tuesday that the 211-acre Heritage Park was bought with the help of a state grant. "You've already decided that issue (regionalism)."

The grant's next deadline is Nov. 1. That means the receipt of an award is at least a year away. And that's another item that concerns Fox.

The historic district ordinance requires that any site within the city's historic district is maintained and preserved. "You can't have demolition by neglect. It's the obligation to preserve," Fox said.

on the agenda

Below are highlights from agendas of government meetings this week. All meetings are open to the public.

Farmington Hills City Council
Farmington Hills City Hall
City Council Chamber
31555 11 Mile
7:30 p.m. Monday, Jan. 23

One public hearing is scheduled for a determination of Rollcrest sanitary sewer improvements and notice of intent to issue bonds.

A proposed ordinance regulating the removal of trees is expected to be enacted.

A report will be presented on the terms of boards and commission members. Discussion also is expected on non-conforming lots resulting from rezoning.

Farmington Board of Education
Schelman Administrative Center
31550 Salawassee
Tuesday, Jan. 24

6 p.m. — closed meeting
6:30 p.m. — policy committee
7:30 p.m. — regular meeting

The board will meet in closed ses-

sion to discuss contract negotiations. During the board's regular session, trustees will hear a report on a study of the Social Studies curriculum, and a proposal to increase graduation requirements in this area. Regular items of business will also be considered.

Downtown Development Authority
Farmington City Council Chambers
23600 Liberty, Farmington
8 a.m. Friday, Jan. 27

This special meeting has been called to allow DDA board of directors to review and approve construction documents for the second phase of the downtown rejuvenation project.

Committee to Increase Voter Participation
Farmington Hills City Hall meeting room
31555 11 Mile
7:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 26

Members will review the 1988 election turnout, a proposed political action ordinance, a voters survey and a future project.

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