

# C'ville voters give narrow OK to millage

By Kevin Brown  
staff writer

By just 27 votes, a 3.5-mill increase in school taxes was approved Monday by voters in Clarenceville Public Schools.

"I'm obviously excited and pleased because we won for the students of Clarenceville," said Michael Shihler, superintendent for the district that includes parts of Livonia, Redford, and Farmington Hills.

Voters also approved, by a vote of 390-288, the school board's request to waive the Headlee tax limitation. This allows the district to keep \$360,000 in taxes that would have been lost had the waiver failed, because district home values are rising higher than the inflation rate.

THE 3.5-MILL increase, approved by 52 percent of voters, 351-324, raises the general operating millage to 41.4 mills. The added millage allows the schools to collect an extra \$600,000 in property taxes.

The money, Shihler said, will pay for employees' salary raises, allow the district to reduce class sizes for grades K-3, and pay for the increased cost of books and other materials.

"And if money is available, we'll seek to hire two full-time media specialists (librarians) for the high school and the middle school."

The millage increase request was made possible when Redford Township voters last summer approved charter township status.

Last June, the Clarenceville board made \$400,000 in budget cuts to keep the budget balanced as state school aid payments failed to keep pace with inflation.

Shihler defended planned salary increases for employees in recent weeks at presentations in district schools to urge passage of the millage.

Noting employees did not get raises this school year — compared to those in other Wayne County districts who averaged 8 percent raises

— he said the district must offer raises to attract good teachers.

Shihler said voters' approval of the millage increase and Headlee waiver "sets a positive tone for the school district, and makes it more attractive" to interested candidates for the post of superintendent, which Shihler is leaving June 30.

ASKED IF school employees may have played a big role in passage of the two measures, Shihler said:

"I think the school employees who lived in the district played an important factor, just like the people out in the community."

"I think we did a good job of informing the voter."

Homeowners, probably in July, will get tax bills which will reflect the increase in taxes from the 3.5 mills. The owner of a home valued at \$90,000 will pay an extra \$157.50 per year in taxes.

Nearly 14 percent of the district's estimated 4,950 registered voters cast ballots on Monday.



## Arbor Week

Farmington Beautification Committee chair Shirley Richardson (left), member Carol Kurth, vice chair Joan Lorenz and Mayor Richard Tupper commemorate the end of

Arbor Week Saturday by planting a 12-foot maple tree in Drake Park. The tree will grow to 35 feet and bear red foliage in spring and fall.

# City OKs art ordinance

(Continued from Page 1)

their knowledge and experience with it (art), to make a judgment call," he said.

In addition to the arts commission's recommendation, the sculpture or structure can't:

- be in the right-of-way.
- be a sign or commercial message.
- pose a danger to the public's health, safety and welfare.
- exceed height requirements.
- demean or degrade any racial, religious, ethnic or gender group.

Despite strong criticisms, the Farmington Hills City Council Monday enacted the controversial ordinance, 5-2. Council members Jean Fox and Paul Sowerby opposed the ordinance.

"You don't want government regulating art in any way," Fox said.

SOWERBY, WHO opposed any attempt to regulate art, unsuccessfully tried to stop the ordinance. "The basis of the recommendation by the

arts commission) is if we determine what's art today, then we're going to determine what color homes are going to be tomorrow, what color cars are going to be allowed. And it is truly offensive as we reflect on it," Sowerby said.

The new councilman, who called the ordinance a deprivation of constitutional First Amendment rights, also tried to postpone enactment for time to review the legal thought behind the ordinance and for zoning officials to offer alternatives to the ordinance.

City attorney Paul Bibeau said he couldn't guarantee that at some time, a judge would find the ordinance unconstitutional. But he added, "It's legal to regulate art just like it is legal to regulate speech. I think it will work."

Sowerby also thought the ordinance's prohibition on sculpture or similar structures that carry a commercial message might also be contrary to art simply because one of America's most renowned pieces is Andy Warhol's Campbell Soup pop art.

Though some council members admitted the new ordinance wasn't perfect, they said they preferred to have something on the books. Corrections can always be made.

Councilman Aldo Vagpozzi unsuccessfully tried to have the provision requiring recommendation by the arts commission removed. But the council didn't go for it. Councilman Phil Arnold said that without the provision, such recommendation or decision on what is art would be left in the hands of a zoning inspector.

## Seniors can get discounts

Farmington-area seniors age 60 and older can take advantage of discounts offered by merchants across the nation. Pictures to be laminated into plastic identification cards will be taken from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Friday, May

19, at the Farmington Hills Senior Center at Mercy Center.

ID cards enable holders to get discounts on a variety of items and services: auto parts, rustproofing, hair care, prescription drugs, eyeglasses and dry cleaners.

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