

Hills acquires historic map

An extremely rare Michigan Territory map dating to 1825 was recently bought by the Farmington Hills Historical Commission. It was presented to the city council Monday.

Called the Ridsdon map, it is the first map that ever showed the Farmington area as an entity. It was done by O. Ridsdon in 1825, 13 years before Michigan statehood.

"It doesn't say Farmington, or Farmington Township, and of course it doesn't say Farmington Hills, it says 'Power Settlement,'" said mayor and local historian Jean Fox. "It's a map to go and stake your claims on."

FOX CALLED it "an invaluable piece of our lovely history."

"I feel particularly fortunate to have this in Farmington Hills."

"Power Settlement" is scripted in tiny, flawless Spencerian penmanship on the map.

The map was done just one year after Arthur Power and his party of Quakers came into this area from Farmington, N.Y., and established several small houses.

Three other known copies of the 165-year-old map survive. One is in the Michigan Historical Collections at the University of Michigan, a second is at the Detroit Public Library Burton Historical Collection and a third also is at the Detroit Public Library.

A special case is being made at

the Farmington Hills City Hall in which to display the map, as well as early newspapers given to the commission.

THE MAP is approximately 27 inches by 41 1/4 inches and is on linen backing.

It depicts about one quarter of Michigan, the southeast quadrant, and is the first map printed after the initial survey of the Michigan Territory in 1817. About six organized counties are shown, among them Wayne and Oakland.

To the north and west on the map is still all Indian country, as the Indian treaties ceding that area had not yet been effected.

"This is an extremely rare and important document," said John Willard, Farmington Hills Historical Commission member.

"Not only are the known copies very scarce, but it is the first map which shows the settlement of what later became Farmington. We are fortunate to have it."

WILLARD WAS instrumental in bringing the map's existence to the attention of other commissioners. Professional restoration of the map was completed in 1989.

The map's restoration took one year.

The Hills Historical Commission paid several hundred dollars for the map, and about the same amount to restore it. An exact figure was not available, Fox said.



Farmington Hills Historical Commission members Steve Olsen (left), Kathryn Briggs and John Willard pose with the Ridsdon Map, the first map that ever showed the Farmington area as an

entity. It denotes "Power Settlement" and was done in 1825, just one year after the Arthur Briggs family of Farmington, N.Y., settled here.

SHARON LEMIEUX/staff photographer

Hills to host conference on historic preservation

Leaders in Michigan's historic preservation movement will gather at Botsford Inn in Farmington Hills on Friday and Saturday, May 11-12, for the spring conference of the Michigan Historic Preservation Network.

"Reining in Galloping Growth — Preservation and the Planning Process" is the focus of the two-day event, which will attract persons from all over the state.

"Farmington Hills is the conference site specifically because of the city's success in saving their historic architecture in the face

of 10 years' pressure of rapid development and growth," said Jennifer Radcliff, of Clarkston, MHPN president.

Speakers will include State Sen. Robert Geake of Northville, State Rep. James Kostev of Canton Township, Kristine Williams, of the Planning and Zoning Center Inc. of Lansing, and Michael Ward, of the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency in Springfield, Ill.

John Donohue and Gerald Fisher, local attorneys with Kohl, Secrest, Wardle, Lynch, Clark & Hampton will speak on "Historic

Preservation: Setting the Tone and Tempo for Growth Management" at a Friday morning session.

"Melding Historic Sites with the 1990s" is the topic with which Jean Fox, mayor of Farmington Hills, will open the conference on May 11. William Costick, Farmington Hills city manager, will speak on historic preservation in the Year 2000 Plan, on Saturday morning. Costick will share the podium with Wendy Strip Sittsamer, who will tell of downtown Farmington redevelopment.

Discussion will be held in the historic ballroom at Botsford Inn, restored by the first Henry Ford in 1923 as a site for American country dancing, of which Ford was an aficionado.

Luncheon each day will be in the Founders Room; on Friday, the Farmington Hills Historic District Commission will be hosts at a reception in the Coach House, to be followed by dinner. Music for the reception and dinner will be by James Jewhurst, pianist.

The Farmington Historic Museum (Governor Warner's Mansion) will be open following Friday's dinner for a special tour for conference attendees; Jewhurst, at the Kanbe Ampico Grande piano in the music room, will entertain with songs and music of 1890-1910 — Governor Warner's period.

On Saturday, Ruth Mochman and Dan Burnett will lead a tour of "Ghost Villages of Farmington" for conference attendees, to bring the weekend to a close. "Farmington Hills has quite a story to tell," said Mochman, chair of the Farmington Hills Historic District Commission.

Hills approves resolution supporting Rouge Rescue

News briefs from the Farmington and Farmington Hills city halls will appear regularly in this column.

● FARMINGTON HILLS

● River rescue — The city council has adopted a resolution in honor of Rouge Rescue '90 on Saturday, June 2.

The city "supports the Friends of the Rouge in their efforts to restore the Rouge River and supports Rouge Rescue '90, a day in which public attention is focused on the cleanup and recreational potential of the Rouge River."

The Friends is a public interest group dedicated to restoring and preserving the Rouge through public education and an annual river cleanup. The Rouge River Watershed Basin is home to 1.5-million people in three counties.

● Intersection upgrading — Five intersections will be improved this year by Trenton-based ABC paving Co. at a cost of \$146,466, the lowest of five bids.

The intersections are:

1. Drake, south of Old Homestead — curbs and resurfacing.

2. Halsted, north of Grand River — closing gaps in the southbound right-turn lane.

3. Southbound Inkster at Northwestern Highway — add a right-turn lane.

4. Farmington Road at Hearstone — tapers will be lengthened to accommodate a planned traffic signal.

5. 11 Mile, east of Halsted — a slope will be graded to permit greater visibility to motorists entering 11 Mile from the Hunt Club subdivision.

Work will be done between May 1 and June 30.

● Cable studio — The city council has accepted an offer from the Southwestern Oakland Cable Commission to buy Fire Station No. 1 on Industrial Park Drive at a cost of \$192,500 for use as a cable TV public access studio.

Fire Station No. 1 will be moved to a new site under construction at Nine Mile and Drake.

● Police presence — Police officers on traffic patrol targeted Farmington Road, north of 13 Mile, over a recent three-day period, handing out 110 tickets. Most were speeding related.

More selective enforcement along the 40 mph stretch is in the offing. City Manager Bill Costick promised.

CITY HALL news beat

● Parking lot landscaping — The city council has amended the zoning ordinance to require canopy trees in and around parking lots, loading areas and similar paved areas serving motor vehicles in commercial zones.

Trees must be of the large deciduous type. Large evergreens will be allowed with planning commission approval.

One tree must be planted per each 2,800 square feet of paved surface area with a minimum of two trees per such area.

Trees must be distributed evenly throughout the paved area. Each tree must have an open land area of at least 75 square feet to provide for infiltration and a minimum trunk radius of three feet for protection.

Curbing or other suitable devices must protect the plantings from vehicles. Trees must be planted prior to issuance of a final occupancy permit but all trees must be shown on the site plan.

The planning commission approved the change.

The change applies to new construction, including building additions.

Councilman Terry Sever opposed it because he felt it might discourage building expansion, especially car dealerships, which rely heavily on paved parking areas.

● Game time — "It's an interesting game that's played in Lansing," state Rep. Jan Dolan, R-Farmington Hills, told the city council.

Much of the wheeling and dealing, she explained, goes on at the committee level, not on the House or Senate floor.

As a freshman lawmaker with no seniority, she said she feels frustrated about knowing "what's going on" but "not being able to do that much about it," particularly in the area of tax reform.

● Time to remember — In supporting a resolution declaring April 22-29 as the Days of Remembrance of the Victims of the Holocaust Week, the city council proclaimed:

"The people of Farmington Hills will rededicate themselves to the principles of equal justice to all people, be externally vigilant against all

tyranny (and) recognize that bigotry provides a breeding ground for tyranny to flourish."

● Improved walkways — The city council has awarded the 1990 sidewalk removal and replacement program to Sterling Heights-based Italia Construction, the lowest of seven bidders.

The cost to replace deteriorated sections of sidewalk in southeast Farmington Hills will be \$125,012. Homeowner assessments, averaging \$152, will cover \$40,435. The city's cost, for intersection ramps and major-road sidewalk repairs, will be \$84,577.

● Tax talk — Councilman Aldo Vagnozzi wants the city council come to a consensus on current state-level property tax proposals. He asked fellow council members to bring their ideas to the table, so the city could send a resolution to Lansing with concerns and ideas.

Short range, he proposes a cap on annual property tax assessment increases to the inflation rate and an increase limit on homesteaded property tax rebates from the present \$1,200. He also wants to look at long-range solutions.

But councilman Terry Sever said, although he "would like to support" such an effort, he is concerned with current state-level proposals and the politics tied to them.

"I hate to sound like a Scrooge," he said, "But I think the old political game is being played because it's an election year. They have a double-edged system where they can vote for everything, then kill it in appropriation."

"I would like to see where expenses will be cut."

Vagnozzi is expected to offer a detailed proposal at a future council meeting.

● New member — Mayor Jean Fox, with council approval, appointed Dorothy Woolley to the Farmington Area Commission on Aging, replacing Esther McDonough who recently resigned. Woolley is a Farmington Nursing Home volunteer.

One seat remains open on the advisory commission.

● Legal decision — The city council expects to make a decision about who will serve as the new city attorney by the end of May.

The council will meet at 5:30 p.m. Monday, May 7 and 14, to interview more legal counsel candidates.



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