

C'ville hopefuls discuss non-college-bound needs

By Marie Chestney
staff writer

Two candidates for the Clarenceville Board of Education believe that schools should pay more attention to the non-college bound high school student.

"Kids need to know what's going on in the working world," said Daniel Morrison, an Antago Street resident who's served on the board for 16 years. "They're not all going to college. They need an education that has a practical application to life."

George Empey, who's challenging both Morrison and Linda Brandemihl for a four-year-term on the board, specifically laid out why high schools can help the non-college bound student.

"We tell kids they have to go to college or they're a failure," said Empey, a teacher in Brighton Public Schools. "That's not true. There's a lot of jobs that don't require a college education but there's a stigma attached if they don't go."

There's a tremendous amount of technical jobs we're not preparing our kids for and that's leaving a gap in our society. There's many high paying jobs that don't require a college degree. We need to implement technical education programs which encompass the board principals of math, science and shop, so that when students go out into the world they can fit in at both General Motors and General Electric."

ALL THREE school board candidates met face to face recently in a round table discussion in the Observance of Educational Affairs.

Two of the three candidates will win four-year terms in the Monday, June 11, annual school election.

Also on the ballot will be a Headlee waiver, wherein voters will be asked to let the district keep its operational levy at 41.4 mills, rather than drop it to 41.225 as the Headlee Amendment requires because prop-

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— George Empey

erty values have risen faster than the rate of inflation.

All three candidates back the district's quest for the Headlee waiver.

If approved, Brandemihl said the waiver will cost Clarenceville taxpayers about \$6 per year.

With Clarenceville just one year out-of-formula, Morrison said the district needed the waiver to stay in "good financial condition."

"We need the override this year or we'll have to go into our fund equity," Morrison said.

The district needs to pass the waiver, Empey said, because the state has not yet done anything to give taxpayers property tax relief.

"We pay the fourth largest property tax in the U.S. and there's no need for that," Empey said. "It doesn't make sense, and I don't like things that don't make sense. Something has to be done because we can only pay so much. We're forcing retirees out of Livonia. Voters should make phone calls to Lansing."

IF THE district got some unexpected extra money to spend, say \$800,000, Brandemihl said she would seek some of it to paying for coun-

selors in the district's two elementary schools.

"Students have changed," said Brandemihl, a homemaker. "Too many are coming to us with problems, and that puts too much responsibility on the teachers' shoulders. We need to identify and address these problems early on. We also need to get parents to take on more of this responsibility."

None of the candidates favored giving the unexpected windfall back to the taxpayers unless the district didn't need it.

"Maybe part of it could be returned," said Morrison, who works as an insurance adjuster. "Voters in Clarenceville are generous to a fault. We always get what we ask for."

"If we don't need it, we should give it back," Empey said. "We can always find ways to spend money. But if we need it, we should use it."

Brandemihl agreed. "But prove to me we don't need it."

After four terms on the board, Morrison said he was trying with the idea of not running again.

"Then I decided, there are some exciting times ahead, now that the district has gone out of formula. I see a chance to do things we haven't done before."

Brandemihl ticked off a list of good things the district has done in the past four years — reopened libraries, reduced class size, a latch key program, a \$10,000 gift to each school.

Empey said he is not a candidate because he disagrees with the way the district is run.

"Clarenceville is doing a great job, but we can't run on that. We have to keep moving on, and stay current with our society and the world we live in. We have to make our students more competitive with other nations, because this is a global society."

School board members earn \$25 for each board meeting they attend.



Linda Brandemihl



George Empey



Daniel Morrison

Linda Brandemihl is a graduate of Clarenceville schools. A 33-year resident of Clarenceville, she attended the University of Michigan. She is a homemaker.

In her first term on the Clarenceville Board of Education she has served as treasurer, vice-president and president.

She has been an active volunteer in the district for nine years. During that time, she has been a member of Friends of Grandview, and is a member of the Clarenceville Middle School Parent Group.

She is a test administrator for the developmental kindergarten program and is involved in a variety of student-related activities.

She has served on the Middle School Planning Committee, the High School Attendance Committee and Livonia Youth Commission's scholarship selection committee.

George Empey attended Bostford Elementary, Clarenceville middle and high schools, Schoolcraft College and Eastern Michigan University, where he earned a master's degree in education and two vocational certifications.

He served a year in Vietnam and is a member of the VFW Post 3941. Before going into teaching, he worked in automotive research and development.

He taught in the Warren Consolidated Schools before taking a teaching position with the Brighton Public Schools, where he has taught for 15 years.

He also has taught at Schoolcraft College and is serving on a committee to develop a technology education curriculum for Livingston County.

A member of the Sports Car Club of America, he races in a trans-am class. With his son he is building a log cabin in the Cadillac area.

Daniel Morrison has lived in the Clarenceville School District since 1957. He has served four terms on the school board, serving in all offices. He is currently the board's secretary.

For 16 years, Morrison has been an insurance adjuster for the Great American Insurance Co. of Troy. He has worked in the field of insurance for 35 years.

Morrison and wife Sharon serve as foster parents for Catholic Social Services. He has eight biological children and one adopted child, who was formerly a foster child.

He is a founding member of St. Priscilla Catholic Church, where he has served on the administration and finance committee and as a lector and minister.

His hobbies are gardening, fishing, bowling, reading and music.

Hills manager focuses on tree removal facts

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Work was stopped at the site April 27, after city staff learned that procedures were not followed. A grading permit was subsequently issued and work resumed April 30.

The developer "didn't have a tree permit for what was cut down. It was my position not to issue a tree permit after the fact," Countegnan said.

Some city officials maintain that a lot of the dispute stems from the differences in terminology used by city staff and administrators. City council members and residents. City administrators maintain that the development is well planned. Planning commissioners walked the site before any site approvals were given.

The year-old tree protection ordinance requires a tree survey and a tree permit.

"I know it looks terrible along the frontage. I know it's nothing any of us have wanted. And I've been leaning on the developer as well. But the integrity of the trees that were to be saved — the most desirable trees — have been saved," Costick said.

BUT FOX said that may not be the heart of the issue.

"If our ordinances which (city manager) Mr. (William) Costick said everybody has observed result in something like this, which is not really the intent of the city — of denying major procedures, the ordinance or the way they are interpreted," Fox said.

The city council reviewed the Oxford Place site plan and approved it Feb. 20, 1989. Only one Drake Road resident spoke at the public hearing, according to city council minutes. Notices of the hearing were mailed to residents within 300 feet of the site. But that would have included residents in the Old Homestead subdivision.

Developers are continuing to landscape with 400-500 shrubs, flowering plants and trees of 12-14 inches in diameter for the area where trees and brush have been removed for a retention pond and boulevard entrance, said Mark Freedman of the Selective Group development company of Farmington Hills.

"We're spending lots of money to make that beautiful. I think it's time to put this to rest," said Ellen Whitefield, Selective Group marketing director.

Old Homestead residents complained that the site looks "naked," particularly for a natural beauty road.

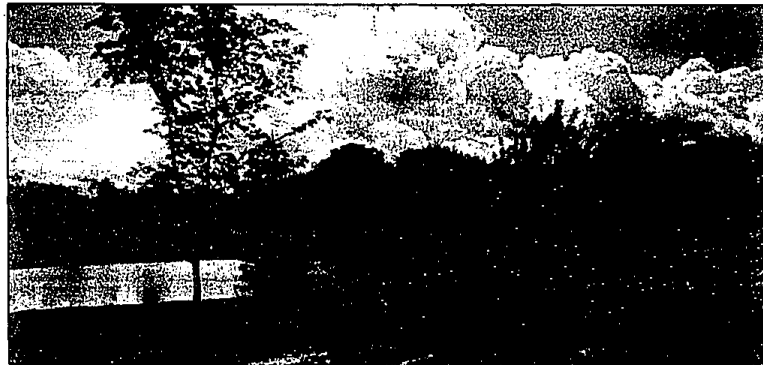
But city officials argue that if the site had been developed as a subdivision rather than cluster housing, far more trees would have to be cut. Tree surveys and tree permits will be required for each of the 73 cluster houses, Countegnan said.

Still, many residents continue to blame city administrators and staff for the tree removals.

"I THINK it is important to note that certainly the city council is not to blame for this matter. . . . But certainly city officials are and I think the people responsible ought to be held accountable, and I think corrective measures and/or punitive actions ought to be taken," Notorini said.

Councilman Lawrence Lichtman disagreed. "I think it's improper to allow the city administration to be used as a scapegoat when the developer has acted in accordance with what the staff has required."

For reminded administrators that the city also has a natural beauty road ordinance requiring protection of natural vegetation along the right-of-way. "What we have lost is the integrity of a natural beauty road," she said.



RANDY DORST/Staff photographer

This is the site on Drake where residents and some council members are upset with the removal of trees to make way for a retention pond and entrance to the

Oxford Place development. Developers are beginning to landscape the area where trees and vegetation were removed.

Council debates Oxford Place

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Heated discussion about tree removal for the Oxford Place development on Drake, south of 1490, at the Farmington Hills City Council meeting May 14 brought a mixed bag of council opinions.

Mayor Jean Fox: She said the area where trees were removed for Oxford Place's retention pond reminded her of the beach at Anzio after (Gen.) Joe (Eisenhower) landed American troops in 1942.

She added that during the review process for the development, "somebody should have had the judgment to put these diverse objectives together or to have brought them back to the council and say, 'Hey, wait a

minute, we've got a problem.'"

• Lawrence Lichtman: He said residents' letters should get a response, including that city staff has been "properly policing what's been happening on that site."

• Aldo Vagozzi: "The bulldozer is mightier than the pen used to write the tree ordinance." He added: "What we approved was a schematic drawing that looked beautiful with lots of trees all along Drake Road."

• Terry Sever: "I believe the integrity should be there of our ordinances." He said he believes things will correct themselves, though if ordinances have been violated, the developer should be ticketed.

Sever agreed with residents that a sales

trailer on the site is too close to the road and should be checked to ensure it meets setback requirements.

• Jonathan Grant: "There have been too many implications already. There are too many doubts out there. We shouldn't be discussing this at this level without the facts in front of us." He suggested preparation of the chronology of events that led to the continuing dispute.

• Nancy Bates: She told residents the development will be beautiful when complete. • City Manager William Costick: "We're going to do everything we can to preserve that site and I truly believe . . . that when it's done, it's going to be beautiful. It's going to look nice."

Hills moratorium stays — for now

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Southfield developer Melvin Katan, who was unavailable for comment Friday, owns the 14.5 acres immediately south of Hillside Estates Condominiums, north of Ixodex Circle. He is still under consideration of his rezoning request.

THE AD HOC committee's report, presented to the city council May 14, offers observations and findings, such as not allowing industrial landfills and incinerators and biological laboratories engaging in genetic research.

The report also compares the city's IRO district with similar zones in other suburbs, such as Troy. Certain types of activities allowed here are not in Troy.

The report also suggests greater surveillance of toxic/hazardous materials usage. That surveillance is "more effective in the long term than specific identification and restriction."

'My problem is that I think it's irresponsible to have this issue hanging in limbo.'

— Lawrence Lichtman
city councilman

"... the IRO ordinance is not potentially more harmful to nearby residents than the light industrial ordinance. The continuing use of both ordinances is a violation of the need for the need for new permit procedures and an expanded inspection program by the fire department," according to the report.

Council members preferred to wait until some changes in the IRO district — if also not in others, where toxic and hazardous materials may be used — before considering lifting the moratorium.

"There is no doubt in my mind there are items in the IRO designa-

tion that should not be in there," councilman Terry Sever said.

Councilman Aldo Vagozzi and councilwoman Nancy Bates said the moratorium should stay in effect until interested residents can participate in any discussion.

"I am just flabbergasted," Vagozzi said. "The least we can do if we're considering lifting it is to notify them it's coming up."

LICHTMAN ARGUED that lifting the moratorium would not necessarily result in more IRO development. Each development would be judged on its merits, he said.

"To not lift the moratorium at this time makes a lot of sense," said Independence Hills subdivision resident Brenda Kandi, spokeswoman for residents concerned about use of toxic and hazardous materials in IRO zones. "I would like to ask again that IRO is rewritten."

Lichtman said he thought it funny that while the council said it didn't have enough information to lift the moratorium, members apparently thought they had enough information to want to rewrite the ordinance.

"I think we should stand up to the mark and have the guts — to cut the crap," Lichtman said.

The IRO dispute began with a 1985 IRO-related zoning ordinance amendment allowing city planners to review proposed land uses, hold a public hearing and impose special conditions such as greater buffers, height restrictions and land use controls to keep out toxic chemicals.

IRO zones are allowed next to multiple-family zones but not single-family.

Hills festival offers lure of '90 Corvette

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"val" said Jody Soronen, chamber executive director. "The money will cover entertainment, printing and publicity efforts, to name a few."

The chamber of commerce has awarded four Corvettes since they began running the Corvette Founders Festival raffle in 1986. "Sometimes our winners end up trading in their car to get the cash, though last year's winner, Jeff Brownlee, ended up trading in the car and upgrading to a Corvette convertible," said Soronen.

JEFF BROWNLEE, a Howell resident, heard about the Corvette drawing through one of his employees at Mid America Transmissions in Howell. "The odds were too good

to pass up," said Brownlee who bought two \$100 tickets. "Here, it cost more money to get into the raffle, but the way I look at it, the odds are a lot better than playing the daily lotto."

Brownlee seems to have an affection for Corvette drawings. Last year was the second year he bet on the festival drawing. He has also bought tickets in the Brighton Corvette raffle for the past four years.

"The odds have been much better in the Farmington raffle," he said. "Last year, Farmington was 550:1 odds and Brighton was 1,300:1. I'll definitely be participating in the Founders Festival raffle again this year."

This year, a maximum of 650 tickets will be sold.