

# Hills wants buffers to reduce freeway noise

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

Michigan Department of Transportation officials have until July 14 — Bastille Day — to respond to Farmington Hills' demands for barriers to buffer residents from noise along I-696.

"We could get it (the MDOT response) for Bastille Day, July 14, and storm the state Capitol," councilman Aldo Vagnozzi said.

The city council compiled Monday with City Manager William Costick's request to send another strong letter to MDOT seeking some revision of noise abatement plans to buffer Camelot Court and Farm Meadows subdivisions residents, south of I-696, east of Middlebelt.

The letter will also continue to ask MDOT for barriers to buffer Howard-Halsted residents, south of I-696, west of Drake.

"... complaints from abutting residents clearly indicate that noise levels have increased dramatically and that it would be inequitable to not address this problem in as prompt and reasonable a manner as possible," according to the statement adopted by the city council.

Vagnozzi's July 14 deadline — the anniversary of the storming of the Bastille Prison in the early days of the French revolution — acknowledged councilman Ben Marks' anger at what he considers MDOT's unwillingness to cooperate with the city's demand for appropriate noise barriers.

MARKS SUGGESTED taking a "caravan of 300,000 people" up to Lansing to demand noise barriers.

"I'm getting so sick and tired of the damned MDOT jumping all over our feet. I think it's unconscionable how they turn us

down," Marks said. "All we're doing is pacifying MDOT. I don't think we're any less a city than Southfield, Royal Oak and Farmington Woods (which have brick noise walls)."

Residents from Camelot Court and Farm Meadows subdivisions and Howard Road have demanded noise abatement, particularly since completion of the widened I-696 last fall.

"I always have hope," said Howard Road resident Robert Schulkin. "It's just been like bucking up against a brick wall." MDOT is proceeding with the final design for a sound wall along the north side of I-696, west of Orchard Lake Road. MDOT also has agreed to add two feet on the original average 11-foot berm and wall buffering Farm Meadows and Camelot Court.

But the city wants more. It wants another two feet added to the berm and wall for an

average 15 feet in height. According to the city's consultants, Barton-Aschman, which measured sound at various locations, another two feet for a total four additional is necessary, Costick said.

"BASED ON our review of their consultants' study, we don't feel the additional footage is warranted," said MDOT planner Lisa Funk. "We're standing by our study. We're standing by our proposal."

If the city wishes to provide additional money, the wall and berm can be raised, Funk added. The two additional feet MDOT already agreed to cost an additional \$50,000.

The city also wants MDOT to allocate \$45,000 for a noise berm to buffer three Howard-Halsted Road residents. MDOT will allow no more than \$15,000 per residence for noise abatement.

"They (MDOT) has never said that it (Howard Road) doesn't need it (noise abatement)," Farmington Hills public services director Tom Blaisell said.

Funk said MDOT is willing to provide \$30,000 to buffer two, not three, residents. "It (noise abatement) is designed for the first row of homes (near I-696)." MDOT denied the original \$160,000 price tag for noise berms for the Howard-Halsted area. But that included cutting through nearby wetlands. MDOT again denied a reduced \$50,000 because it exceeded \$15,000 per resident.

If MDOT will give the requested \$45,000, city officials said they could use that to help defray noise abatement costs in the Howard-Halsted area. One option is to use dirt expected to be excavated for storm drainage improvements in Kendallwood subdivision for the noise berm, Blaisell said.

# Former schools chief Roderick Smith dies at 70

By Casey Hans  
staff writer

Dr. Roderick Smith, a retired Farmington school superintendent who was well-loved by friends, died June 9 at his Spring Arbor home fol-

lowing a lengthy bout with cancer. The 70-year-old longtime educator was under the care of the Hospice of Jackson County.

"I was crazy about the man," said Larry Freedman, a longtime friend and retired assistant superintendent for the Farmington schools, where he worked under Smith.

"There are maybe a handful of people in education... who I hold up there. He's one of them. 'He lived and breathed his profession.'"

Smith served as superintendent for the district from 1967 to 1973, during a time when the community was changing from rural to suburban and when the district was struggling financially, Freedman said. He endured a number of millage defeats.

**'There are maybe a handful of people in education... who I hold up there. He's one of them.'**

— Larry Freedman  
former assistant superintendent

IT WAS under Smith's direction that Harrison High School and Wood Creek Elementary were both built.

He also introduced a sex and health education program into the school system, which drew criticism from some in the community. What eventually developed into today's bilingual program developed from an idea of Smith's.

ALSO INVOLVED in his community, he served as director of Detroit

Baptist Manor, a senior complex in Farmington Hills.

He was a longtime board member, and one-time chairman, of the Botsford General Hospital board of directors. He was a member of the Farmington Kiwanis Club and other civic groups.

A graduate of Spring Arbor College, Greenville University and Michigan State University, Smith was a decorated World War II pilot.



Dr. Roderick Smith well-loved

# Area man bags Corvette in festival drawing

The odds were on Tim Santelu's side June 7 when Mary Bush, Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce president, drew his ticket for this year's Founders Festival grand prize — a red 1990 Corvette.

"I was in a state of disbelief when they called and told me I'd won the car," Santelu said.

"You always hear about these

things happening to other people, but never think it will happen to you. I left for the dealership to look at the car right after they called me — I had to see the car to believe my good fortune."

Santelu says he's not sure whether he will keep the car or cash it in. He said last weekend was like a whirlwind.

"My business, Santelu Vauts Inc. of Livonia, was celebrating the grand opening of a new location, so there was a lot of preparation work to do. Everything has happened so

fast. I haven't been able to make a decision — but I think I'm leaning toward keeping the car."

THE CORVETTE drawing, sponsored by the Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce, helps raise money to support the annual Founders Festival. At \$100 per ticket, this year's drawing raised \$55,100.

"We were pleased with the amount of tickets sold," said Jody Soronen, chamber executive director. "We raised enough money to

cover the cost of the prizes and to run the festival. Although we sympathize with those who didn't receive a prize, we would like to thank all our supporters who helped us in this effort."

Each year, a handful of chamber members help sell drawing tickets to support the festival.

This year Walter Sundquist, owner of Heeny-Sundquist Funeral Home, and a member of the chamber's board of directors, sold 111 of the 551 tickets sold. In fact, he sold the grand prize ticket. Jake Jenkins of

Greene's Hamburgers was also a top ticket seller.

Other Founders Festival prize winners included Scott Hocking of Royal Oak, \$1,000; Kathryn Bush of Farmington Hills, \$800; Malibu Schenk of Farmington Hills, \$700; Fred Steinkopf of Farmington, \$600; Tim Hannab of Troy, \$500; John Bepko of Farmington Hills, \$400; Ralph Yoder of Farmington, \$300; Virginia Sultan of Farmington Hills, \$200; and Dan Cafolia of Farmington Hills, \$100.

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