

DDA OKs more upgrading, fountain study

By Casey Hans
staff writer

A subcommittee of Farmington's Downtown Development Authority will study the feasibility of a new fountain and other accessories in an island in the city's main parking lot, as the DDA moves ahead with its redevelopment program.

The DDA board Tuesday approved construction documents for the third phase of the program, which includes the city's main municipal lot southeast of Grand River and Farmington Road, and is expected to cost the DDA about \$200,000.

Contracts for demolition, asphalt, cement, electrical work and pedestrian lighting installation were also approved to

talling \$119,232; the balance will entail the purchase of lights and posts, landscaping work and architect's fees.

Additional related work may also be considered by building owners in the area, on their private property.

DDA members valued the bid process and awarded the contract to Peter A. Basile Sons Inc. of Livonia, who was general contractor on the second phase of the project.

The DDA board also agreed to study the feasibility of a new fountain, flags and a possible pedestrian clock for the center of the parking lot at the request of the Kenneth Lenchner, president of the Equitable Group, owner of the Downtown Farmington Center and the largest landholder in the downtown.

The items will be considered for an area where there is currently a fountain and some seating.

The subcommittee will report at the DDA's next regular meeting, scheduled for Monday, July 9.

DDA BOARD members stressed Tuesday they did not have money to pay for a fountain, and that Equitable would need to decide what it could contribute as part of the study.

In estimates given Tuesday, a fountain design, construction and installation could range from \$40,000 to \$70,000.

DDA board member Robert Fitzpatrick said he's willing to consider the concept, but is concerned about the money.

"I don't have any problem hearing your concept, but what's the bill? You're building a champagne tower on a beer budget — you can't do it."

BOARD MEMBER Jody Soronen said she was inclined to stay with the city planner's original design, which included trees, several pedestrian lights, grass and benches in the island area.

"I don't think I would like to see another fountain there. That is a parking lot divider — it isn't a place. I think that kind of expense is going to be wasted in that place."

Frank Clappison, DDA member who will head the subcommittee study, said he considers the island a "focal point" but cau-

tioned that "construction and maintenance of such a fountain is one of the greatest concerns this board has."

IN RECOMMENDING the subcommittee feasibility study, DDA member and City Manager Robert Deadman said, "We haven't really had time to digest this thing. We know we don't have the money to do it."

"I think we owe it to ourselves to explore it."

Lenchner came to the board on June 12, suggesting the 11th hour changes as the board was preparing to vote on the third-phase construction documents and contracts.

DDA cancels contract with publicity firm

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

FARMINGTON

Contract canceled — The Downtown Development Authority board voted June 12 to cancel its promotional contract with Hermanoff & Associates, on the recommendation of a DDA subcommittee.

Hermanoff had handled four promotional events, regular downtown newsletters and other publicity for the DDA, as the board made its push into the promotions area during the past year.

The DDA was in the middle of a two-year, \$80,000 contract with the Farmington Hills firm.

The DDA promotions subcommittee will continue to study marketing and promotional goals, and may contract in the future with Hermanoff, or another firm, for future events and activities.

"We do not discount them from a program in the future," said Greg Hohler, DDA board vice president.

"This board is relatively pleased, but we just want to step back and re-evaluate," said Robert Deadman, city manager and DDA board member.

Sandy Hermanoff, principal in the public relations firm, said they are waiting for direction from the DDA. "I think that refocusing . . . is a good thing," she said. "The important thing, is we all want the downtown to be strong and viable."

FARMINGTON HILLS

Liquor license — The city council has awarded a full-year, Class C (by the glass) liquor license with Sunday sales to Anita's Mid-East Kitchen in the old Tally Hall at Hunters Square, 14 Mile and Orchard Lake Road.

Anita and Pierre Farah relocated their family-style restaurant to the

CITY HALL news beat

front of the remodeled building from inside Tally Hall. They plan to serve beer and wine. They operate another restaurant in Troy.

The city staff did a background check of the Farahs and found nothing. Mayor Jean Fox and councilman Terry Sever opposed granting the license.

Fox said licenses should be reserved for applicants willing to make at least a \$500,000 investment in their restaurant.

Sever opposed granting more licenses at this time. "We don't seem to have control of all the licenses we currently have," said Sever, a proponent of tougher liquor law enforcement.

Councilman Ben Marks, one of five council members who approved the license, called the Farahs "very ethical, honest and businesslike."

Court denial — The state Supreme Court in May denied the Selective Group developers of Farmington Hills a leave to appeal a 1987 zoning case against the city of Farmington Hills.

Justices denied the developer's request "because we are not persuaded the questions presented should be reviewed by this court."

In 1987, former Oakland County Circuit Judge Frederick Ziem upheld the city's refusal to rezone five acres on the northeast corner of 12 Mile and Drake Road from single-family residential to commercial.

Selective Group owner Mike Horowitz appealed the case to the Michigan Court of Appeals, which upheld Ziem's ruling.

Horowitz did not return the Observer's phone calls.

"We argued the property was zoned single family and could be a cluster," Farmington Hills city attorney Paul Bibeau said.

Selective Group argued that the city's refusal to rezone was confiscatory. The company also argued that if developed for commercial use, the property is worth more than \$600,000 and if developed residentially, is worthless.

The appeals court disagreed. " . . . potential developers' profits are not central to determinations of the reasonableness of a zoning classification where a landowner may profit under that classification."

The Selective Group did not own the acreage but was given authority by the owner to seek rezoning.

But the city has now condemned footage along both Drake Road and 12 Mile for right of way for the proposed 12 Mile boulevard, according to assistant city manager David Call.

Farmington Observer

(USPS 107-840)

Published every Monday and Thursday by Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Farmington, MI 48009-0910. Second-class postage paid at Farmington, MI 48009-0910. Postmaster: Send address changes to Observer & Eccentric, 805 E. Maple, Farmington, MI 48009-0910. Telephone 644-1100.

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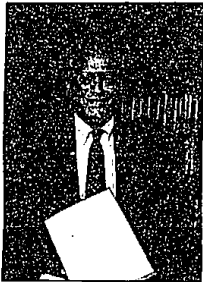
Marks named top volunteer

The Community Center of Farmington-Farmington Hills has selected Ben Marks as the 1989-90 volunteer of the year.

The selection was based on his dedication and leadership in conducting a successful capital campaign to remodel the building and construct a new outdoor band shell.

Marks also has volunteered as construction supervisor throughout the renovations, spending countless hours on the job.

The board of directors has further honored Marks by selecting him as their president for the 1990-91 term.



Ben Marks

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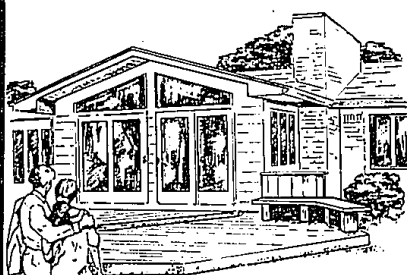
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